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Sophie Lankenau · Editor

Welcome to the 60th issue of 8000 Plus – a very special 5th birthday edition! We're very proud to be going – stronger than ever – in 1991, and to be associated with such a sturdy, long-lasting and thoroughly capable machine. Five years ago, many people would have questioned the likelihood of the PCW being around in 1991, and we're only too pleased to be able to prove the cynics wrong.

So, how are we going to celebrate? I'll tell you how. We've taken a good look at clip art for the PCW this month, with a round-up of some of the best examples of the collections currently available. There

is a staggering amount of clip art to be had for the PCW, so making our choice was a far from easy task. However, we decided to be ruthless, and have our verdict can be seen on page 10! What's more, this month's MicroDesign tutorial actually shows you how to use clip art to enhance your DTP work.

We've also showed you how to fit an internal speed upgrade to the machine – yes, the Cirtech Sprinter can be installed by you in the comfort of your own home. If you turn to our step by step guide on page 57.

And of course, for those of you who have been with us since day one,

you'll know that a September issue wouldn't be complete without an annual index! We've listed every feature, review, tipoff and listing to have appeared in the magazine over the last twelve months, so you've got no excuse for not being able to track information down again!

Finally, our birthday has brought out the generous in our natures – turn to the inside back page for details of a fabulous competition, bursting with prizes. And not only does the first winner to be drawn earn themselves the prize of their choice, they also lay claim to an all-expenses paid trip to visit us in Bath! Let's get going!

NEW SPREADSHEET SET TO HIT THE MARKET

We reveal startling new plans for the latest in PCW business software

Spreadsheets for the PCW are often slow and clumsy to use. But, it only takes one program to break the mould and we can now reveal that a brand new spreadsheet is on its way. In an exclusive interview with 8000 Plus, Software Imperative told us of their plans for an accounting program.

"I don't see why PCW owners should settle for the existing products," said Andy Wilton. "A program like Cracker is old, and it's showing its roots."

Software Imperative are already hard at work on the new spreadsheet. It will aim to be totally user-friendly and all functions will rely on pull-down menus. But they are also planning some innovative features.

One buzz-word at the moment is 'optimal recalculation'. In existing programs, the PCW user can choose to automatically recalculate the sheet as new values are entered. But this is often a slow process, as the entire spreadsheet is updated when just one value is changed. Software Imperative aim to create a spreadsheet that uses optimal recalculation, meaning that it will only



Andy Wilton, Software Imperative:
"I aim to create a market leader"

recalculate the dependent values, making it quicker to use.

Windowing is another new idea that could radically change the way people do their accounting. It allows the user to have more than one spreadsheet on the screen.

"I'm looking at the possibility of having 3D spreadsheets", Andy Wilton told us. This is an idea that has been stolen from the PC market and will allow the user to

make direct comparisons, between financial years, for example.

But, one of the changes that is thought to be crucial, is the increase in size. "A typical PCW owner has a three story house and is still trying to live in the kitchen," Andy Wilton said. He is referring to the fact that many programs do not make full use of the memory resources.

He claims that the new program will use all of the PCW's memory efficiently. This, of course, means that users will be able to create bigger spreadsheets than the existing programs cater for.

The new release will be aimed at newcomers but Software Imperative also expect to convert existing users.

"You look at the stage that DTP has reached on the PCW," said Andy Wilton, "and wonder why there isn't a comparable spreadsheet." In fact Software Imperative say that, given the age of the competition, they expect to reach the dizzy heights of the number one spot. "I aim to create a new market leader," said Andy Wilton. And we have more than a sneaking suspicion that he will do just that...

THE CHEAPEST YET!

Sprinter manufacturers, Cirtech, have announced the imminent release of the cheapest ever hard disc for the PCW. Now 20 Mbytes will cost you only £199 – a full £100 cheaper than its closest rival, the Vortex disc from SCA Systems.

This could be the signal for one of those spiralling price wars that delight every computer owner, but cause tremors of consternation in the industry. "The price should certainly create a stir," said John Roberts from Cirtech.

It is only appropriate that the creators of the Diamond disc should name its sequel Gem. The new Gem disc will offer many of the features of its older counterpart. For instance it can boot-up the PCW without the aid of a floppy disc. This



The Gem hard disc from Cirtech is sure to be a big-seller. The price is only £199 – making it the cheapest hard disc around

will come as an extra bonus to those who can't wait to dispose of the 3" disc altogether. Cirtech also claim that Gem can be used at once, with no complicated installation to cope with.

Gem is provided with its own interface and is available in two sizes. The £199 model offers 20 megabytes of storage whereas the 40 megabyte disc costs £299 (plus VAT). Although, it may sound as though the Diamond disc now has a limited shelf life, Cirtech assure us that this is not the case. "The Diamond disc does offer some unique facilities, such as allowing multi-user networks," commented John Roberts. However, they expect Gem to become their major seller.

Both Gem drives come with a year's warranty and one optional extra is a parallel printer port and cable, costing an extra £19 plus VAT. For further details of Gem, contact Cirtech on (0835) 22471. Or look out for the review in next month's issue of 8000 Plus.

NEWS

by Karen
Donaghay

Apply within!

How about this for a golden opportunity? We at 8000 Plus are looking for a new Staff Writer. A PCW owner, the successful candidate should possess the ability to write clear, lively copy, and have fearsome eye for detail. Experience in magazine production is a definite advantage, although not essential. Applicants should send their CV and a covering letter to Sophie Lankenau at the following address: 8000 Plus, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

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TWO NEW PCWS ON THE WAY!

Not just one, but two PCWs will be launched by Amstrad in the near future. We can now reveal that they will be called the 9256 and the 9512 Plus, thus following in the time-honoured pattern of the well known 8256 and 8512.

Serious PCW spotters may catch the newcomers at the Business Computing '91 Show, at the end of September. This is thought to be the most likely venue for the unveiling of the new machines.

Amstrad intend to provide a printer with both machines. It is thought that the 9512 Plus will have a daisy-wheel printer but the type of printer supplied with the 9256 is still not known. Both PCWs will be sporting a new look, with white screens and 3.5" drives.

But, despite such radical hardware changes, the new PCW will function in a very similar way to the old machines. LocoScript will come as part of the new package along with the latest version of CP/M. This may cause some of the older PCW programs, such as Mini Office, to run into difficulties but most other software producers do not foresee any problems.

They are geared up for the changes, and are preparing to release their programs on the 3.5" disc. True to form, the PCW is keeping up with the times and looks ready to become a greater success than ever.

For more details on the Business Computing '91 Show see our Show Biz story below.

COUNTING CALORIES

When cream cakes are not as naughty as they ought to be, then it could be time to reach for a new PCW program entitled Diet. But, take heed! This is not for the Twiggles amongst you, or even for those who want to lose the odd pound.

Diet is aimed at those who are slimming for health reasons, or for students making a serious study of nutrition. The program is based on the government's Manual of Nutrition and it is designed to work out calorie intake against calorie requirements.

To do so, it divides people into three categories: very active, moderately active and sedentary. Oddly enough, us journalists fall into the latter class. Sedentary, us? Fat chance!

To obtain the program, write to Mr

Meikeljohn enclosing two discs and an S.A.E. One disc will be kept as payment and the other will be returned to you with a copy of the program. The address is 6 Courtlands, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 6EY.



It's all munch of a munch-ness for the PCW's new calorie counter

PCWS EN MASSE

This signpost caught a reader's eye as he travelled through the Welsh valleys. Sadly, it was only the PCW's namesake: the Presbyterian Church of Wales, who had decided to gather together. And there we were, thinking that the largest PCW Club in Wales were having an annual get together!



Has Mr Daglish spotted the very first computer language show?

SHOW BIZ

The Business Computing '91 show is going to be held in Earl's Court this year on 17th-20th September. Aimed strictly at the business world, it is sure to have many a spreadsheet vying for your attention.

Unfortunately, few PCW products are seen at such event, but there may also be a few surprises in store for the PCW follower. The event is rumoured to be the launching pad for the new PCW and this prospect should draw in its fair share of PCW fans!

Of course, the merest hint of a whisper is enough to guarantee the attendance of 8000 Plus. Although we will not be exhibiting at the show, the sharper among you may spot our Editor perusing the stands - she will be visiting the show on the 17th and 18th of September.

If you would also like to attend, telephone the Business Computing Show on (0203) 421213 to order your free tickets and fact pack.

Anyone without a ticket will be charged £5 at the door

A NEW PRINTER FOR THE 90's



The new LC-20 aims to follow in the footsteps of the highly successful LC-10

The LC-10 was one of the most popular printers ever known to computer-kind. Now, with sales topping the 2 million mark, Star Micronics have finally decided to launch its successor.

The new printer is known as the LC-20, and, with a price tag of only £199 plus VAT, it is definitely in the budget category. This makes it ideal for both the small business and the home user and it is bound to prove popular with PCW owners.

The features include eight NLQ fonts, and speeds of 45 characters a minute, or 180 C.P.S. if you're not too fussy about quality. For more details, contact Star Micronics on (0494) 473333.

COMPETITION CORNER!

And now, here's the moment you've all been waiting for. Hold on to your seats folks - it's competition time!

The first prize is a real cracker. In our July issue we offered a 3.5" drive, to fit into your PCW. The correct answers to our word puzzle were as follows: PCW, drives, monitor, disc, printer and software. J. A. McBride from Bangor was the first out of the hat and is now the proud owner of an internal drive for his (or her) PCW 8256.

But that's not all! We have many more goodies to give away. Not just one, but ten thesauruses were claimed this month. Lots of you got the answer right. The thesaurus was invented in the 19th century and prizes go to Mr A. Tuppin in Brighton, Mrs King in Preston, Mr A. Chambers in Wokingham, Mr K. Taylor in Colchester, Mr Hick in Midlothian, Mr Ramsay in Fort William, Rev. Goodsell in Ashford, H. Davies in Wigtownshire, D. Jones in St. Mellons and Ron Grace in Epsom.

And last but not least, Miss Wilson sent us a message from Edinburgh. It said, "should this card have the good fortune to be drawn from the hat, I should very much like to add a Thesis PS daisywheel to my set." The Latin for daisy is indeed Bellis - and she wins the printwheel of her choice. Dave Knowles from Bristol was even cleverer. He told us the name for a lawn daisy, Bellis Perennis. Finally, our third winner was R.G. Collins from Andover.

Orders please!

We at 8000 Plus have always been proud of our reviews. But did you know that PCW owners are not the only one to listen to our advice? According to a report published in the Computer Trade Weekly, the retailers listen to us too. We received an 'honourable mention' for helping the computer dealers choose the best products to stock.

Two's company

One lonely PCW is looking for a partner, with a view to marriage. At least that's what the Association for Marriage Enrichment tell us. Their 8256 is feeling the strain, and they are on the lookout for an inexpensive companion. So, if you can provide a cheap (or free) PCW, then why not give them a ring! The number to dial is (071) 9376956.

A WORK OF ART

We're sure that this month's cover will give many of our arty readers plenty to admire and we would like to extend our thanks to the staff at the gallery for allowing us to shoot the picture there, and to the artists who let us use their work in the photograph. And, for the budding art critics amongst you, here are the illustrious crew.

The painting is by Neil Macpherson and the sculptures were made by Lee Grandjean and Michael Ayrton. Finally, on the shelves are some colourful ceramics by Rob Whelpton and Alison Britton.

All of these works can be seen at Beaux Arts Gallery in York Street, Bath.



SPENDING SPREE

People are still investing in computers, despite the recession. This was the surprise message in a recent survey, which stated that many large companies are spending more on Information Technology than ever.

The survey was carried out by SMM communications and as the company chairman, Ross McBeath, said: "the majority of companies recognise that computers have a positive effect on their business." Quite so!

However, small businesses are expected to show a drop in their expenditure. The survey forecasts that this group will show a 13% decrease in their computer spending.

LASER DAYS

The Desktop Publisher DTP program has been rather elusive in recent times. Now Laser Distribution aim to put this to rights by selling the program as a stand-alone product. The new price will be £24.95 (including VAT).

On a more frivolous note, they will also be selling The World of Soccer and Head Coach, described by Laser as 'team management' games. What they really mean is that they are both centred around football! Both programs cost £23.45 inclusive of VAT.

The number to call for further details on any of these programs is (0404) 46660

NEWS

Out of Africa

Always eager to bring keen PCW owners together, this month's Club News spreads its wings wider than ever before.

First, Africa. David Simpson lives in Lusaka, and would like to set up a 'casual' PCW user group in Zambia. The idea would be not to meet as a club, but to exchange information through an occasional newsletter on such matters as available services, consumables, hardware and original software.

A great opportunity for all PCW owners in that part of the world to share tips and ideas. Get in touch with David at PO Box 50502, ZA 15101 Ridgeway, Lusaka, Zambia.

Then, to the Sultanate of Oman, where JM Hasney tells us of a 'club' that he is part of - only three members at the moment, but they hope to grow. So if you're in that part of the world and you own a PCW, why not help that expansion?

Contact Mr Hasney at PO Box 18929, RAFO Thumrait, SALALAH, Sultanate of Oman.

Finally on the international circuit (although based firmly in this country) comes the MD2 International User Group. Hot on the heels of their mention in last month's News column (concerning their charity-supporting, MD2 Fonts disc) comes news of the very first MD2 newsletter.

Packed full of interesting tips and information, it is well worth a read for every Micro Designer - and while you are at it, why not join the club? Details of the newsletter, the club, their clip art discs and the charity fonts disc are available from Phil Cole, 15 Elsham Close, Bramley, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, England, S66 0XZ. Or you can get in touch by calling them on (0709) 543390.

Cornish Delight

Now down to Cornwall, where it seems that a new group may be on the way. Malcolm Surl of LuxSoft has floated the idea of a new group in the Duchy - in fact, plans are so concrete that the first meeting has been booked for a Saturday in October. For more details, get in touch with Malcolm at King's Acre, Luxulyan, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 5EE. The telephone number is (0726) 850 870.

Old favourites

And so to news of our more established clubs. After the summer

recess, things are begin to move again. The M25 Amstrad PCW Club meet at the Hanwell Community Centre, Cuckoo Avenue, London W7 at 7.30 on the third Monday of every month.

September's meeting will therefore be on the 16th of the month. It will come in two parts - the Annual General Meeting and a look a ProSCAN with resident expert Tony Brown. Details from Gunter Wittenberg, 37 West Avenue, PINNER, HA5 5BZ.

The Teeside PCW Users' Group goes from strength to strength. Some members keep in touch with the club even though they now have PCs to replace their PCWs - which must say something about the group and about the PCW!

The group's September meeting will be held at the Middleton St George Scout Hut, and will be the Annual General Meeting - an ideal opportunity for you to get to see the way the club works.

You can obtain details from Gladys Baker, 8 Knayton Grove, Greenvale, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS19 7RW, telephone (0642) 580018. If you enclose an SAE you will also get a map of the area, a copy of the latest newsletter and, if there's any room left, a copy of the constitution.

The South Essex PCW Club have an interesting meeting format: everybody is invited to get up and speak on their chosen subject. If you want to know more about it, or feel that you have something to say, get in touch with them through Jim French at 145 Noak Hill Road, Billericay, Essex CM12 9UJ. But be prepared to meet a 'waiting list' - not surprisingly, they always run out of time!

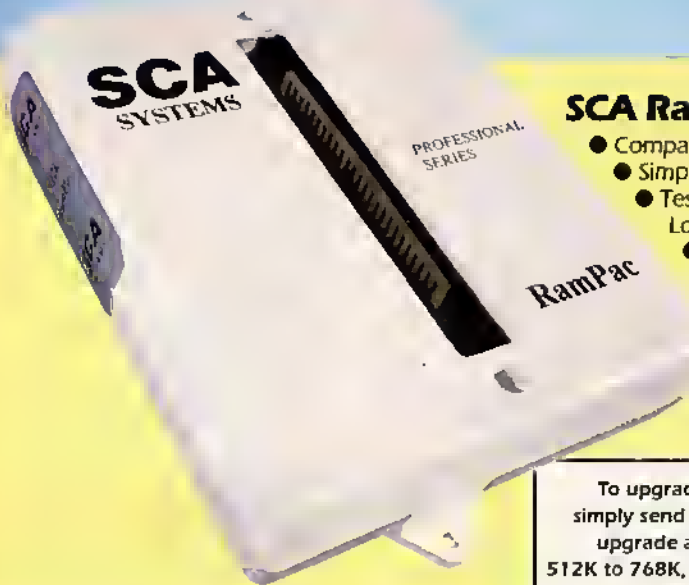
Fylde away

Finally, news of a new venture. The Fylde Computer Club meets every fortnight at Lytham Sports and Social Club. Although they cater for all computer users, there is something called a 'Newsletter/PCW corner'. Details from Steve on (0253) 43029.

And don't forget that we want to hear details of your club. If we don't hear from you, we can't mention you, so get cracking and write to Club News, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Owing to the rigours of our press deadlines, please send October's news, to reach us by the first week of September.

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Artistic Impression

With the help of clip art, you and your PCW can form an impressive creative team. Karen Donaghay helps you assemble your art collection

Into action

This month's Micro Design tutorial is all about clip art and how to use it. Turn to page 33 for the latest advice!

Think of an object, any object! It could be a chinchilla, it could be Father Christmas, it could even be the crown jewels.

Whatever pops into your head – animal, vegetable or mineral – the chances are that you can print it out on your PCW dot-matrix printer. And the source of such imagery? None other than the ever-popular clip art disc.

For a fee that ranges from £10 or under to £40, it is possible to buy a whole collection of clip art, giving you a range of artwork that can be used in many situations. The images range from decorative borders to wedding scenes, from Tudor houses to New York at night. Given such a huge choice, it really is surprising that more people are not making use of clip art files.

So, on to using these images. The general idea goes something like this. Imagine that you are busy creating a page using MicroDesign 2 or Stop Press. You are writing a piece on local wildlife, and fancy adding a picture. A flick through your clip art collection reveals an image of a fox or a badger. Then you load it straight into your DTP page and that, as the saying goes, is that.

Given that most people claim to be hopeless at drawing, this could be the best way to get illustrations into a page, giving you a chance to go beyond Lowry's matchstick men, and get down to producing some lifelike pictures.

So far, so good. Loads of choice and easy to use. There is, however, one snag. While no-one could deny that it's great to have such a wide range of clip art to choose from, it can be a confusing task.

For instance, clip art can be highly specialised. Mick Harrison is quite plainly a fan of all things small and furry. One of his Graphics discs resembles Noah's Ark (although why anyone would want a picture of a hairy-nosed wombat, we're not quite sure!)

On the other hand, although some clip art tries to offer a wide range of choice, but could find it hard to get precisely what you need.

Another point to watch out for is quality. The biggest moan, from those who take clip art seriously, is that all too often the images are scanned in and thrown on to disc, without being tidied up or modified in any way.

If you are buying clip art to produce high quality printouts, it is frustrating to

discover that the artwork is below par. To help you fight your way through the mountains of art work, on offer, we gathered together clip art discs from far and wide and put them to the test.

So, how did we rate what we saw? Well, in terms of choice, certainly the range of clip art for the PCW is tremendous. We also found that all of the clip art came in one of two forms: the first group are known as CUT files and have, appropriately enough, the suffix .CUT. These can be used in Stop Press or MicroDesign 2. The second type are called MDA files (bearing the suffix .MDA). These can only be used with MicroDesign 2.

Sadly, the other DTP programs on the market seem to have fallen by the wayside as far as clip art support is concerned. The companies we spoke to said that, due to a lack of demand, they do not deal with clip art for the Desk Top Publisher, Fleet Street or Newsdesk International. But that still leaves the two top DTP systems with a whole wealth of images to choose from.

So why not take a peek at what's on offer, with the 8000 Plus round up of contemporary clip art!

Special case

A couple of very specialised clip art discs, that have not been included in this article, are the Parish Magazine Library from Creative Technology and a collection of heraldic designs called Armorial from Flexiclip Modes. To obtain more details call Creative Technology on (0889) 567160 or Flexiclip Modes on (0395) 271872

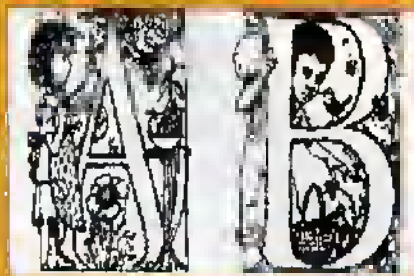
THE TEST RESULTS

Because there is such a proliferation of clip art on the market, we decided to put our collections through a 'real-life' test. The categories we chose relate to those that you may look for at home:

decorative, animals, special occasions, transport, fun and sport, household and miscellaneous. We have had a mini competition in each case, and have picked our three favourite pictures from

each category. These are the illustrations which you see below. We think that we've provided some fine examples of what you can expect from PCW clip art. And here are the results..

CATEGORY 1: DECORATIVE IMAGES



These letters from Graphics Galore, Book 2 are called Whimcaps. They are an ideal way to brighten up a dull page of text or even a personal letter, by using them as, say, paragraph openers. There is a Whimcap for every letter of the alphabet.

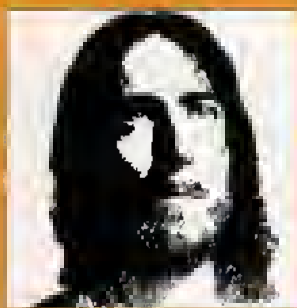


Michael Harrison has included this ornate frame in his collection. The unusual design makes it good for posters of a theatrical nature.

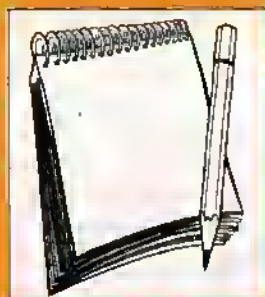


Make an announcement in style with this clever little scroll! It is one of a range of clips from Gotsot Typaset by Tacnation.

CATEGORY 2: MISCELLANEOUS



We thought this one would be great for a parish magazine or a church leaflet. It comes from the Michael Harrison collection



Sending someone a short letter? This picture from Rodesign's Misc Clips could add new meaning to the saying 'just a quick note.'

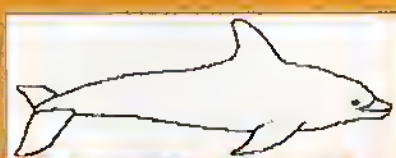


Strong design made this conductor a sure winner in the miscellaneous category! This piece can be found on the Variety Disc CA2, from AGB Illustrations

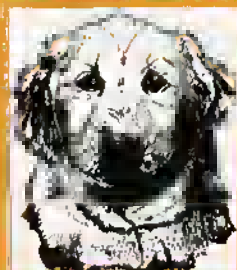
CATEGORY 3: ANIMALS



One charming frog is just part of the huge range of animals in the Michael Harrison collection

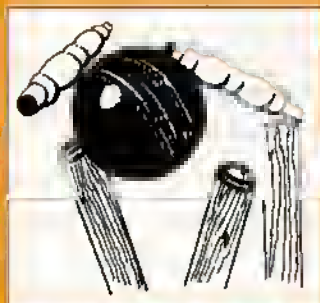


This simple yet well-contoured dolphin could easily be incorporated into a swimming club logo or emblem to create a really individual effect. It can be found on the environmentally conscious Green Disc from AGB Illustrations



Finally, let's not forget men's best friend, featured more than once in The Clip Box from HD Design. This particular hound is known as Rex

CATEGORY 4: FUN AND SPORT



Summer days on the cricket pitch are captured by The Sports Disc from AGB Illustrations



A simple design can be the most effective. These cards, from J'nJ's Ster Disc No. 1, prove the point!



We couldn't resist this lazy cartoon! It is one of many in the Getset Typeset disc collection

CATEGORY 5: SPECIAL OCCASIONS



Halloween will never be the same again! These scary monsters come from the Getset Typeset collection



Pick a lucky black cat from AGB Illustrations' Variety Disc 2



Only one hundred shopping days left until Christmas! Why not think ahead with the Innovative Christmas Clips disc from Rodesign

Get in touch!

If you agree with the 8000 Plus jury's decisions about the best clip art, you may want to get hold of some for yourself. So, here are the addresses and telephone numbers of the companies we have mentioned:

AGB Illustration
5 Queens Drive
Prestwich
Manchester M25
8HQ (061) 773 2702

Goldmark Systems
51 Comet Road
Hatfield
Herts AL10 0SY
(0707) 271529

HD Design
3 Roundthorn Way
Goldsworth Park
Woking
Surrey GU21 3QN
(04867) 81394

J'nJ Designs
70 Alderson Road
Liverpool L15 2HL
(051) 2286593

Michael Harrison
283 Abbey Street
Derby DE3 3SW
(0332) 381210

Rodesign
Dept 8
195 Milwards
Harlow
Essex CM19 4SJ
(0279) 444313

Don't forget, the companies listed above represent just a small portion of those who supply clip art. You will find others in the advertisements in 8000 Plus, and companies with new ranges to offer are usually mentioned in our News Plus pages

Sneak preview

As we have already mentioned, there is a vast amount of clip art to be found for the PCW – and what we have shown you here is but a small selection of examples. Most of the companies we mention will be happy to send you a catalogue of their collections (providing you send them an sae), so that you can browse through before making your decision to buy. Remember to phone them first to check!

CATEGORY 6: TRANSPORT



VW POLO

This happens to be the reviewer's own car! It was chosen from a wide range of automobiles in the Michael Harrison collection



Can't afford the real item? Don't despair! This Porsche from HD's Fineline Plus has got to be the next best thing. The disc also supplies aeroplanes and lorries



At the other end of the time scale, this Bentley will add a bit of class to the average page. It is one of the more detailed pictures from Tecnation's Getset Typoset

CATEGORY 7: HOUSEHOLD



Green lines and plenty of detail give this picture, from HD Design's Fineline Plus collection, a highly professional image for use in, say, a firm of architects



This eye-catching image is a chunky typewriter from AGB Illustrations' Verlety Disc 1



It's enough to make the mouth water! Graphics Gelore from Goldmark provides a good selection of food and drinks

PRODUCT AND SUPPLIERS DIRECTORY

Company	HD Design	A.G.B. Illustrations	Tecnation	Michael Harrison	Goldmark Systems	Rodesign	J 'n' J Design
Collection	Fineline Plus and The Clip Box	Variety Discs 1 and 2, Flags, Sport, Borders and The Green Disc	Getset Typoset! - a three disc variety collection (also includes fonts)	Range covers 21 discs	Graphics Gelore, Books 1, 2 and 3 (Each book is divided into libraries)	Musical Instruments, Xmas Clips, Misc Clip1 and Toolbox.	Star Disc No. 1 (variety disc)
Number of clips	Fineline Plus: 170 The Clip Box: 300	Approximately. 70 per collection	Approximately. 120 clip art pieces (and 18 fonts)	Approximately. 70 per disc	Varies from library to library	Approximately. 70 per collection	48
Quality	Fineline Plus: first class. The Clip Box: good	Consistently good quality	Mostly high quality, but some jagged lines.	Variable. Most are good quality	Reasonable quality	Very high-quality images.	Rather untidy
Range	Fineline Plus covers office equipment, transport, and houses very thoroughly. The Clip Box covers a wide range of subjects	Offers good coverage of specialist topics. The variety discs cover a surprising range of topics in a very small space	A range of topics covered reasonably well in 'cartoon' style	Masses of animals and plants. Other topics are covered well due to the huge amount of material on offer	The entire three book collection covers virtually every topic under the sun, including hundreds of small icons in Book 1	The specialist discs cover most material, whereas the variety disc covers some of the standard stuff, with rather too many trucks for our liking	This offers a small range of 'quirky' material, such as the Beatles and a couple of snails
Presentation	Nicely packaged box, with good clear printouts	Each collection comes with a printed leaflet	Collection comes with easy-to-use, glossy book	First order will arrive with the total range printed out on A4 paper	Three books contain printouts of all of the clip art in each library	Each disc comes with a printout of the pictures	Each disc comes with a printout of the pictures
Price	Fineline Plus £31.95 The Clip Box £37.50	£12.50 per collection	£24.95	£8.50 - 1 disc £15.00 - 2 discs	Books cost £4 each 3 libraries from Book 1 - £8 1 library from Book 2 or 3 - £3 + £3.50 per disc	£10 per collection	£9.99
Type of files	CUT	MDA	CUT	MDA	CUT	CUT & MDA	CUT

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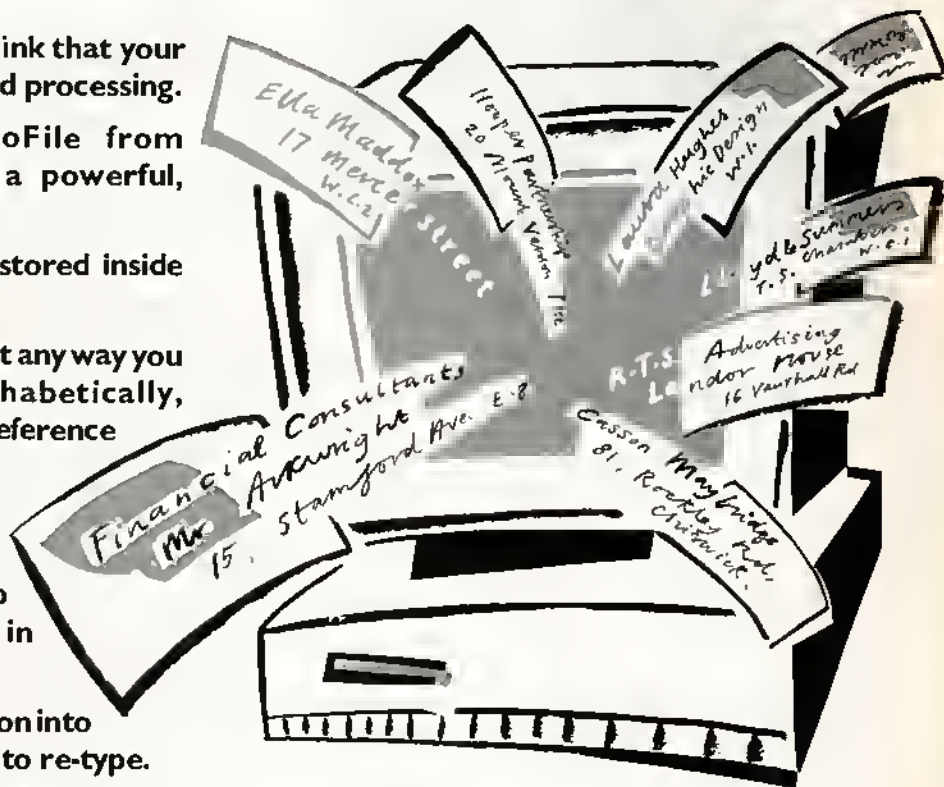
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Protext Surgery

This month it's your turn! Martin Le Poidevin opens his casebook and answers your queries on Protext, the alternative PCW word processor

Question:

I'm a bit mystified by Protext's PROGRAM mode. Why is it there? I've found that for assembling programs and so on, there is no problem in using the DOCUMENT mode. Perhaps PROGRAM mode is not quite the straightforward text editor I thought it was? If not, is it useful for anything else?

By the way, although it was not my original intention, I do now find myself very happily using Protext as a great word processor!
S.C. Leatherhead.

```

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     30    A      14.37   2.47   Good value
     45+   A+     16.67   3.56   Great for
                                   you!
```

Answer:

Protext was originally invented as a text editor of the sort you are describing. The text editor version is bundled with Maxam II among others. However, Armor quickly realised the potential of what they had created, and Protext – the full word processing version – was born.

There are some remnants of the old text processor left, though. {ALT}[F7], for instance, will clear all the files on disc which have the filetype '.BAK'. Very useful when you are developing a program, but very dangerous when working with a word processor!

The old text editor is still installed inside the new word processor. It's called 'Program mode', and can be called up by typing **PROG [RETURN]** at the 'a>' prompt in command mode.

The only immediate difference you will see is that the status bar at the top of the screen will change. The word 'Document' changes to 'Program', the 'Page' indicator changes to 'Ch' (which indicates the number of characters there are between your cursor and the top of the document), and the ruler line automatically disappears.

When you begin to type, you'll notice even more oddities. The 'word-wrap' no longer functions, so that a line will continue indefinitely until you press [RETURN], and the [PAGE] and [RELAY] keys have no effect. [PARA] simply takes you to the next line. Any embedded commands or printer codes will be ignored.

The reason for all this is that the text for a program must be as 'clean' as possible, and use only the pure ASCII characters, along with certain universal

You can use Protext's Program mode to capture your codes on paper – the top illustration is a normal printout, the bottom one is the same document in Program mode

'non-printing' characters such as space, tab and return. To all intents and purposes, it is the same as the text produced by LocoScript's ASCII function – only quicker!

You will find that Document mode produces text that most assemblers can read, but it is probably safer – and just as convenient – to use PROG mode.

But that is not the end of the story. With PROG mode, you can also produce data files for spreadsheets, databases, other word processors and so on. You can even produce program files for Mallard BASIC. This is worth knowing, because it gives you a much more flexible editing screen than the one that comes with BASIC – [FIND], [REPLACE], and the cursor keys are all fully supported.

You can also use the 'KEY' function (see May's Protext tutorial) to store many of the longer commands. "PRINT CHR\$(27)+", for instance, could be stored under [EXTRA] C. You even have a line numbering facility – when you have typed in your program WITHOUT line numbers, but with each line ending as normal in a carriage return, get to the a> (or b>) prompt, and type NUM followed by A to add numbers, then the first number that you want (probably 10 for a BASIC listing), and the increment (again you are likely to want this to be 10).

You can now save this to disc, load up BASIC and RUN the program. If you have Flipper (see the later question about Flipper) this becomes easier still!

There is one other surprising use for the program mode. It cannot actually use all the command and printing codes that you put in your documents – but it can display them. So if you have a complex document, and you want to be able to remember how you achieved various clever tricks, print the whole document out in PROGRAM mode.

Question:

I know that in Protext you can run a CP/M program (say BASIC) from the a> prompt by typing *BASIC [RETURN]. but you're left in CP/M and have to run Protext again by typing PROTEXT from the A: prompt.

Is it possible to save a bit of time and exasperation (I always seem to type 'Protext' wrong in that situation!) by having Protext run automatically? D.H. Cheltenham

Answer:

The easiest way of doing this requires a bit of thinking ahead.

When you first boot up Protext, copy the files PROTEXT.COM, PROTEXT.CFG and *.PTR over to the m> drive (you can do it from within Protext using COPY PROTEXT.COM M [RETURN] and so on). You could make this part of your EXFILE (see the tutorial in the May edition) so that it happens automatically at boot up time.

Now, when you come to use BASIC,

put the disc with BASIC into the drive and type *BASIC !M:PROTEXT. Basic will run, but when you leave BASIC by typing SYSTEM [RETURN], instead of the A: prompt you will see 'M:PROTEXT', and Protext will quickly appear on the screen.

Notice that because it is now on the M: drive, you do not even need to insert your Protext disc!

Whichever option you use, this is clearly a useful alternative to Flipper if you want to have quick and easy access to more than one program at a time.

Question:

I've been using Protext on PCWs in my business for several years now. We have four 8512s. However, we're now having to upgrade to PCs. My question is: is there a version of Protext available for the PC, and, since I want to keep my trusty old PCW at home, are the two versions compatible? One imagines they ought to be, but in this world of computing, it seems that you can't be too sure!
J.R. Leeds

Answer:

Indeed there is a PC version of the program. It is now up to version 5, and it contains all you will be familiar with from your PCW version, and with lots more besides!

And the good news is that once you have got over the problems of altering the CP/M format to MS/DOS and vice versa (use something like LocoLink or Moonstone's 2 in 1), Protext PC and Protext PCW get on like a house on fire.

The only problem that you might encounter will be with the printer codes. Protext PC saves its printer codes slightly differently to the PCW, and sends them over to the PCW in that format - you'll see a small cross before each of them. You can counteract this with a simple REPLACE command, using ?!h as the find 'string', and !h as the 'replace' string. Repeat this for all similar codes you have used. The only unfortunate thing is the price. PC Protext costs £150.

Question:

How can I get Protext to print out my documents in elite (12 pitch), by default like LocoScript? Whenever I try to print something out it comes out in Pica (pitch 10) unless I put [ALT]x at the beginning of a document.
W.C. Aberdeen

Answer:

This will mean searching around in the SETPRINT utility.

Make sure that a disc containing CONFIG.COM, SETPRINT.COM and PCW.PTR is in the A: drive. At the a> prompt type SETPRINT [RETURN], and at the menu which appears, select option 6 - the 'Load printer driver' option. Confirm the filename suggested (it should be PCW.PTR), and then choose option 3 from the menu - 'Set printer control codes'.

What this display shows are the printer codes - what you type, and, below, what Protext actually sends to the printer to turn them on and off. For instance, if your cursor (which you can move with the arrow keys) is over i, the lower half of the screen will tell you that to turn italics on the printer is told '27 4', and to turn them off, it is told '27 5'. This is despite the fact that you only type [ALT]i for both - the computer works out which one it should send.

For this exercise, we will need to change some of the codes associated with the letters @, c and p.

Edit these by moving your cursor over the character in question, and type [RETURN]. This will move the cursor to the display at the bottom of the screen, which you can then edit.

When you have finished editing that character, hit [STOP] to return to the top of the display.

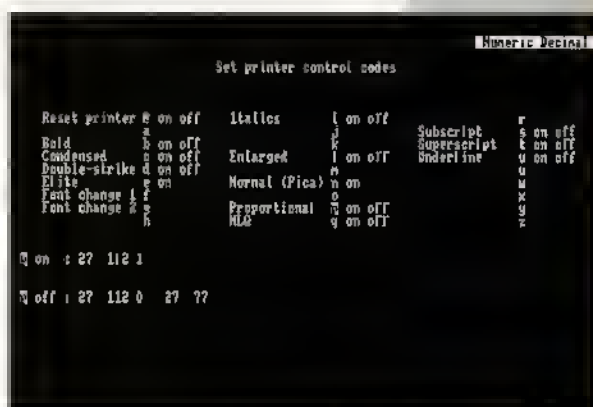
So, move your cursor to '@', and press [RETURN]. Change '@ on' from 27 64 to 27 64 27 77; change 'c off' to 27 77, and change 'p off' 27 112 0 27 77. When complete, press [STOP] to get back to the main menu.

Select option 7 - save printer driver - to make these changes permanent. Your printer will now print everything in pitch 12, or elite.

Alternatively, you could save this customised version of the driver under another name - say ELITE.PTR - and then load it from command mode using PR ELITE.PTR. You can also do this from within a document by giving the command >PR ELITE.PTR.

The same commands, using PCW.PTR will put the original printer driver back in control.

This should also work on the 9512 (where the file to change is the PCW9512.PTR file), although to see it to the best effect, you will also need to get hold of a pitch 12 wheel.



Wilhelm didn't know what to do. He'd got Protext and loved it, but his aunt preferred LocoScript. In fact, she wouldn't accept letters written in anything else. He was truly stuck.

His answer? To get into his SETPRINT utility, and get Protext to print out automatically in 12 pitch - or elite, as it is known. This made both Wilhelm and his aunt very happy. Judge for yourselves!

By changing the details in your Setprint file, you will be able to make your documents print out in Elite style - with 12 characters to the inch, just like LocoScript does

Question:

Can I use Flipper with Protext?
P.E. London SR3

Answer:

You certainly can, and you will gain a lot by doing so.

For instance, you can double the number of editing screens which are available. Protext, of course, maintains two editing screens (you can swap to the other one at any time by pressing [ALT] Y whilst you are editing or SW [RETURN] when in command mode). You can swap text between them almost at will by marking out some text on one screen, and then swapping to the other and pressing [ALT] O.

For instance, you could have a rough draft on one of the editing screens and a finished article on the other; you can then

'import' bits of the rough text for 'cleaning' up in the final document.

That, notice, is before Flipper comes into play. With Flipper, you can increase the number of editing screens available by loading two (or more, if you have Flipper 3 and bags of memory) Protext environments. The time it takes to flip screens one and two over to three and four will be slightly greater, of course - there is no way of changing that - but you can import text.

This relies on Protext's SAVEB function - which will save a marked block to disc. All you have to do is make sure that both your Protext environments are reading the same disc, and then save your block to that disc (M: will not do, of course, since under Flipper each environment has a separate M: drive) using a name like 'BLOCK1'.

Now flip to the other Protext environment, position your cursor in the

text at the point at which you want the block to appear, and type MERGE. You will be prompted for the name of the block, which will then be inserted into the text at the point you have specified.

Flipper can also be an invaluable time saver when it comes to programs that you have written using Protext. Again, making sure that you are writing to and reading the same disc, you can have Protext set up as your text editor, with your Assembler, compiler or interpreter (for instance, Mallard BASIC) set up in the other.

Save the program to disc, swap to the other environment and simply RUN or assemble it.

You could equally well run a database or a spreadsheet.

The only important things to remember are a) keep sensible numbers of back-ups and b) always let the drive motor stop whirling before you flip.

Dunning

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LOCOPLUS



Welcome to September's LocoPlus, your essential guide to the software in the Locomotive family. We're starting off with an extended LocoScript surgery, then it's on to our LocoFile tutorial. The section finishes with a page of your own hints and tips. Onwards!

Question:

Regarding the letter from the reader who finds his 8512 printer progressively prints towards the top of succeeding pages, I have the same problem using this paper. I set the printing instructions to A4 fanfold but by page 4 or 5 the print is moving up the page. I would be very grateful if you could help me correct this fault.

I use LocoScript 2 for letters and so on and I am about to use Protext for writing novels.

Can I anticipate the same printing problems with that programme and if so what can I then do?

Answer:

This reader thoughtfully enclosed his paper and the answer is very simple: it isn't A4. If you're having problems like this, check up carefully.

Go into printer mode, select [F3] paper, make sure the type you're using is

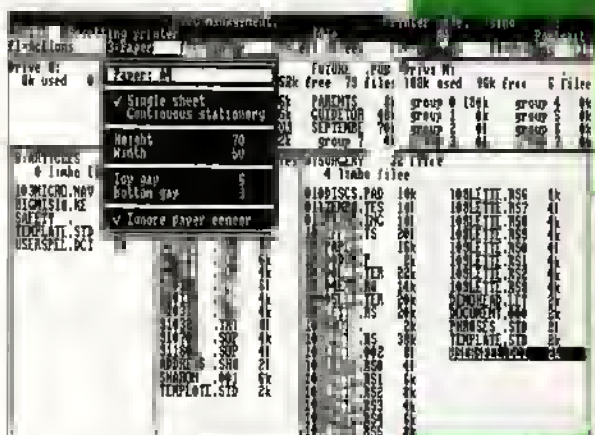
ticked, then put the cursor on Show paper type and press [ENTER].

You'll be given the details of the paper that the printer expects. All that actually matters, regarding this problem, is the height.

The height of A4 paper, for instance, is 70 lines. As the printer works at 6 lines to the inch, divide that by 6, and your paper should be 11 2/3" long. Next, measure the paper. If it isn't, then it is not A4.

This doesn't matter, of course. If you want to use that type of paper, you need to set up a paper type with the right details and set the printer to recognise this special paper.

It does matter if the printer believes the paper is 70 lines long and it's actually 72, as the paper sent by this reader is. At the end of 70 lines, the printer will roll on the set number of lines in the gap and start printing again, only it will actually be printing 2 lines closer to the top of the page. This will accumulate as the print run goes on.



In printer mode, [F3] Paper lets you show the paper types and exactly what the printer expects the paper to be...now measure the paper...

It is worth remembering that the computer and the printer will do exactly what you tell them - they are very obedient! It is hardly their fault if you're not telling them the truth, is it?

Question:

I have been using the 8512 quite successfully for some time. Now I desperately need to use the manuscript template on the B disc. Could you give me an idiot's guide to doing this?

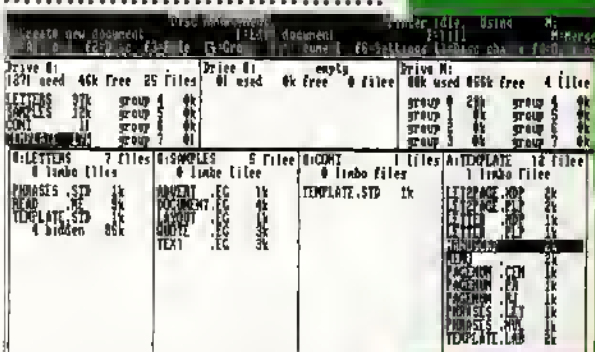
Answer:

Certainly. It is a very simple procedure - all you have to do is rename it TEMPLATE.STD. There are several templates, with samples, thrown in with your LocoScript disc, but they have different names and will not actually work as templates until they are

renamed. Any file at all can be used as a template simply by renaming it TEMPLATE.STD.

Copy the manuscript template on to a B drive disc, in the group you want to work in, then simply use [F3], choose to Rename file and type TEMPLATE.STD.

The next time you create a document in that group, the screen will be set up exactly as if you were editing the template and will hold all the information concerning margins, pitch, headers and footers and so on exactly as in the original template. LocoScript merely looks for the phrase TEMPLATE.STD, and then offers the layout which that currently represents.



The Loco1 master disc has a whole group of templates. Put them on a disc, allocate them a group and re-name them TEMPLATE.STD

Question:

I purchased LocoFile specifically to create a database of all the songs on my rather large tape collection. It's very easy to forget precisely what songs I do have and although my main aim was to know just who, what and where, I figured I might as well include other information, too.

However, soon after starting this project, I realised that I would not be

able to squeeze it all on to a single disc. I condensed the records as much as possible, but such is the size of my collection that even these measures weren't enough and I ended up getting an additional 3.5" drive and memory to store the files on.

I'm now half way through the disc capacity and it looks possible that I may run out of space again.

I realise I could go to a hard disc but given the expense that isn't really

an option. I also realise that with LocoMail I could easily split the file (for instance under A-M and N-Z) but this presents a problem in deciding the best basis to split.

Ideally I'd like the basic information for all songs to be on one file. I've no desire to lose all the other information, and I was wondering if, with LocoMail, it is possible to create a LocoScript file of "cards" containing this, one for songs starting with 'A'



Screen Test

I really set the cat amongst the pigeons by talking about screen dumps. I've had a series of letters from 9512 owners, saying plaintively that they can't get it to work. Well, of course they can't, it only works with a dot matrix printer, as I explained in last month's pages.

The trouble is, that a lot of people with 8 series machines use the screen dump facility to take a shot of the disc manager screen showing the files on a disc and keep this stored with the disc, making life considerably easier when they're trying to find a specific file, or have simply forgotten what's on a disc. But 9512 owners can't do this.

There are ways of doing it through CP/M but there are also a lot of PCW owners who have never stepped out of LocoScript and don't want to. Does anyone have any ideas on a method for obtaining a printed list of the files on a disc, short of scribbling them down and then typing them into a file?

one for 'B' and so on. I don't want a hard copy because obviously with updates. I could be printing for ever, just a file on disc which I can call up to get full particulars as I need them. Is this possible at all?

If not, is there any way to use LocoMail to update other LocoFiles so that only additional files are added in the same way, so that you only print out changed files and avoid duplication?

Answer:

This is one of these questions where the answer is yes, but it's not going to be easy. Everything you've mentioned can be done using LocoMail, but how you go about it needs considerable thought, and before you can even start thinking about it, you have to get to grips with LocoMail, which is not always easy for something as involved as this.

So there are two ways of going about this. If all you're interested in is the final result, and it's important to you and you're prepared to spend some

money, you go to someone who understands LocoMail and ask them to set it all up for you.

Using it once it is set up is simple; it is the setting up which can be hard.

If you're enjoying using the computer and learning as you go, and it rather sounds as if you are, then get hold of LocoMail and start working through the book. Once you understand just what you can do with LocoMail and LocoFile together, which is just about anything, then you can start experimenting.

You could keep one 'Master File' (and it wouldn't matter if this used more than one disc) and type all the details you could possibly want into the records on that file. Then you use LocoMail to extract different combinations of information from that file and read the results into other LocoFile files.

You can also use much the same set up to produce a LocoScript document containing the information. This comes under Reports.

Once you have the original master set up, you might be better off adding information the other way around, by

typing it into a LocoMail document. Then you can arrange it so that your LocoFiles will read the new information from the LocoMail document, which would save you running through the whole thing with your LocoMail 'extractor' programs every time you add new information.

All these details are the ones which need careful thought to start with.

The main point of the whole thing, is that you should only ever have to enter the information once, and having done so, you should be able to manipulate that information in any way you want - that really is the whole point of using a database.

It is true that if you are heavily into using a big database, a hard disc is the answer. It's also true that it will run far faster and put far less strain on your drives if you run it from memory.

If a hard disc is not an option, you would be better looking at expanding memory than bigger drives. A bigger drive lets you store more but it doesn't necessarily make it easier to actually use that information.

Question:

I have just bought a PCW8256 and I am obviously an absolute beginner. However, after reading your magazine, I am tempted by LocoScript 2 because of the availability of LocoFile. Before parting with my money, I would like to be satisfied that it will do the job I have in mind for it. I am wary of your comments about LocoFile being an "Idiot" database.

As a civil aviation enthusiast, I keep a log of all my flights as follows: Date, Flight Number, Airline, Aircraft type, Aircraft Registration, Departure Airport, Arrival Airport, Flight Time and Notes.

Would LocoFile sort this information so that I could list, for example, how many times I have flown on an individual aircraft, (by registration number) or how many times with BA or how many times on a Boeing 747 and so on?

Answer:

You're right to be cautious, the answer is no. LocoFile by itself will not do that. What it will do is let you type in all the information, then index it, so that, for instance, you could index it by Airline, and all the times you flew with British Airways would be together, one after the other in the file, but you could not print just those and it would not tell you how many BA records there were.

However, if you invest in LocoMail as well, you can extract from the LocoFile and do exactly what you want.

You can be very clever with the combination of LocoFile and LocoMail, for instance, it would be possible to set it up so that you only needed to give arrival and departure times and the flight duration time would be worked out for you, (as long as you stick to GMT and don't forget about summer time).

It could work out flight delays, how late a flight was and so on. It could then

list flights, for instance, by delay time and airline to let you see which one performed best.

LocoFile with LocoMail is extremely flexible, but it does take a bit of learning and you do need to be prepared to stick at the book and work right through it until you have a good grasp of the principles of the program. You really can't just look something up and expect to be able to do it.

I get an awful lot of letters from people who want to do one specific thing with LocoMail and LocoFile and it's just not possible to answer them.

The only alternative to working right through the book is to get someone to do it for you. The problem is that if you start using LocoMail to manipulate LocoFiles, you are really into the realms of programming.

It is not like word processing and you really do have to do everything absolutely correctly or it simply will not work properly.

Question:

For two entire books, I solemnly changed my newly created document to Pi10 and LS2 via [f4] on LocoScript II. Now, thanks to you, I now understand the dreaded Template and I'm churning out work.

I have also just discovered in these pages how, at long last, to get rid of that awful message 'Continuous and create a paper type of my own'.

So, having created my new paper type and my book Template, how do I marry the two? I still find that when I go for Save and Print after editing I get the message Portrait unless I happen to be printing on Continuous already, in which case I get the dreaded 'Continuous with Portrait as

an alternative. Is there a quick answer, like marrying my new Cont. Book paper to the book template, so the Printer automatically knows which paper. Or when I forget, do I have to cancel and return to the Disc Manager screen then press PTR and start again? Most frustrating!

The other query regarding paper is - am I doing something terribly wrong or does one have to lose a sheet when using continuous paper? For instance, when I have printed this letter I will have to turn up the paper to tear it off, and no way can I prevent the printer turning up its six line gap. This means that my 54 lines would then go off the end. So I have to turn up the rest of the sheet and start at the perforation. The printer somehow

needs to be told paper is already loaded and ready to go, without the extra gap being necessary. Is this possible?

Answer:

Glad to know we've helped so far. The template and paper problem seems to be the biggest hurdle to a lot of people and no doubt we'll keep coming back to it.

In answer to your query, you can marry the two quite easily. Go into your template, select [f1] Actions and Document setup, which takes you to the Headers and Footers Screen.

Now press [f5] for Paper and select Paper type. You will see a list of all the paper types you have set up. All you need to do is put the tick beside the type



you want to use (use the [+] key). When you first load the computer, various default settings are made, including a paper type for the printer. At the moment, this is set to A4 single sheet on your Start of Day disc. This means that the printer expects to be loaded with A4 unless you tell it different. So, the first time you try to print a document with a different paper type set up inside the document as I have just described, things will not go according to plan.

If you remember, press [F3] for Paper when you are in printer control mode, after loading the paper, if you forget, you can get into that mode any time simply by pressing [PTR]. (You don't need to cancel everything and go back to the Disc Manager Screen, you can do this from inside the document.)

You will see the same list of paper types and you need to do the same thing, tick the type you actually have in the printer. If you forget, it doesn't matter. After you've asked the machine to Save and Print, you will see a message telling you that the intended paper type is different from the one that the printer thinks it is loaded with. (It still thinks it's using A4.) At this stage you have a choice of changing to the intended paper or sticking to the original. You only need to tell it to use the intended paper and it will adjust to the continuous type.

You can be cleverer yet. If you use your continuous paper most of the time, you can change your Start Of Day disc, so that the continuous paper becomes the default. You can still use other paper types, just as you are at the moment, but you will save yourself a step when you start printing each day.

It is also worth remembering that the printer remembers what you used for your last printout and expects to use the same paper type, unless you tell it otherwise. If you're using continuous, it doesn't revert to A4, it stays with the continuous. This occasionally causes some confusion...

If you would like to try altering the default paper type, put your Start of Day disc into the drive. From the Disc Manager Screen, press [F6] Settings, and select Printer defaults.

The one you want is Default paper type, so select this and press [ENTER] and yet again, you'll see that same list of paper types.

Select the one you want with a tick and press [ENTER] again and work your way back to the Disc Manager screen.

Don't forget to choose Write to Settings Standard when you're given the option, or the new choice that you have made will not be remembered the next time you load the machine.

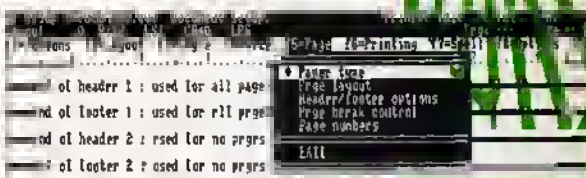
Now on to your next question. As far as the spare sheet when you're using continuous goes, I've given up on this one. There are ways and means of fiddling things to avoid it, but they're complicated and they really mix things up if you forget what you've done.

If I'm working with continuous paper, I roll the first sheet on as you are doing, but I just let things go for the rest of the session and sort it all out at the end. If you're doing a series of letters, wait until you've printed the next one before tearing off the previous one and you won't have to wind the paper on.

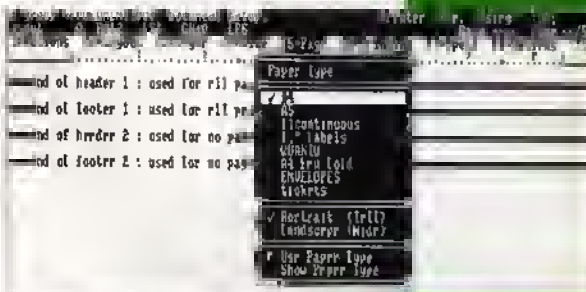
That way, you only have to wind it on after the very last sheet of the printing session.

I always keep the spare sheets handy and use them singly for reprints of single pages or when I'm using single sheets for some reason.

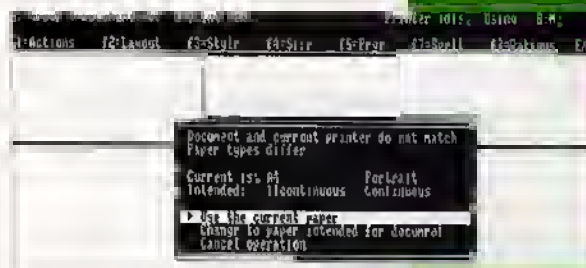
I trust the next two books will be easier still!



[F1] to Document set up, then [F5] Paper lets you choose paper type...



Tick the paper type you need for documents to be produced using this template



You now get the choice either to change to the paper you have set the document up to use, or to print it out

Question:

I've had my 8512 for 22 months and up to now, no complaints. Recently, however, and for no apparent reason, I'm getting the Disc Error Message in Drive B, DISC ADDRESS MARK MISSING

I've tried pressing Retry and Ignore and the same error message appears. When I press Cancel, it returns me to the Disc Management Screen with Drive B completely empty of information and consequently I've lost all information on that disc.

It's happened to three discs over the last week, I've used two other B Drive discs and they have been fine. So please can you tell me what I'm doing wrong. Unfortunately, the first disc I lost was not backed up and there was about 6 weeks work on that particular disc.

Answer:

The first point is my old, oft-quoted favourite. Repeat after me, 'I will always back up my discs... I will always back up my discs...'

This happens again and again and again, and I have the post bag to prove it.

Please, try to get into the habit of thinking to yourselves as you remove a disc after a session. 'What will I do if this disc will not load the next time I want it?' So back it up and, if it's really important, keep a security copy somewhere else. Also if you're having drive problems, get them fixed before you use that security copy and possibly damage it as well.

Right, that's the lecture over. Now let's try some practical advice. In both these cases, suspicion lands on the drives concerned. But there are other things worth considering. Is it possible that the discs involved are all from the same box and might have been faulty to start with? Is it also possible that the discs concerned have all been stored somewhere risky, like near a telephone or a loud speaker?

Both options are unlikely, but it's certainly worth finding someone else with a PCW and asking them to try loading these discs to see what happens. The six weeks' work just might be safe after all, even if it is damaged, it may be recoverable on another machine, either through LocoScript, if it will load at all, or through CP/M.

If they do load on another machine, that proves it's the drives at fault, but all

is not lost yet. If the drive is actually worn, what tends to happen is that you start seeing a message insisting the disc has been changed when it hasn't. This is because the heads are not aligned as well as they should be, or there's a little play in them and they lose the track.

If you're not seeing that, (and even if you are) but you are having loading problems, the drive may be dirty. It is well worth buying a cleaning kit and running it, several times if necessary.

In the case of the first machine, one wonders about the conditions it was kept in before. The worst problems seem to be caused less by simple dust and more where tobacco smoke is involved. If you look at the nicotine on a pub ceiling and think of that being inside your drive. And it's sticky, so that dust and grit get embedded in it and this can be fatal.

If all that fails, you'll have to replace the drive. Yes, you can do it yourself, and you should be able to find a supplier in the adverts in this magazine. If you're fairly comfortable with a screwdriver, it's not a bad job, and quite straightforward, as long as you're not actually terrified at the idea of taking the back off the machine in the first place. There have been articles in 8000 Plus to help you with the procedure, too!



Question time

Liz Bruce runs a LocoScript surgery every month in 8000 Plus. No problem is too small for the Loco surgery unit, so if you are having difficulties, fret no more. Pop your query on a piece of paper, and send it to Liz Bruce, LocoPlus, 8000 Plus, 3D Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW. All letters, as you can see here, are printed anonymously, so there's no need to worry about feeling shy! Don't forget, your enquiries can be related to any of the Locomotive family of software - not just LocoScript. And for those of you who have crossed the border into LocoScript PC, help with teething troubles is at hand in these very pages!

Question:

With respect, it appears to me that you have got things a bit confused on the limbo issue. You are, of course, right, to advise people not to use the limbo facility as a long-term storage system but the dangers of doing so do not seem to be quite as you describe.

As I understand it, when a file is edited, moved, or erased, LocoScript transfers a limbo copy of the original file to one of the CP/M user groups 8-15 on the disc.

So it is perhaps a little misleading to say that the limbo area is a special section but restricted in size. It is the disc as a whole that is restricted in size and only when the disc is nearly full will creation or addition of further files displace older limbo files to be lost forever.

You say that if one erases a file one has just edited then 'if you are lucky' there will be a limbo copy. But there will always be a limbo copy of a file one has just erased; even if a disc is completely full, the act of erasure will free the same amount of space for

a limbo file to be kept. Only by adding new files to a nearly full disc will older limbo files be caused to 'drop off the end' and disappear.

You go on to say in the same column that the limbo copy will be 'the previous copy of the file, not the most recent', I disagree. Surely a limbo copy of a file one has just erased will be a copy of that actual file and will, therefore, be the most recent.

Of course, if one makes changes to a file and then decides to abandon edit, the file left on the disc will be the original file without the changes, but this is not a limbo copy.

Lastly, you rightly say that a limbo copy of a file one has edited, will be a copy of the previous version of the file. But this doesn't seem to matter since one also has the non-limbo copy of the file in the version just edited. If one accidentally erases this edited version, the limbo copy will become this edited version and one will not have lost all the changes made. Of course, it may be that my understanding of the matter is not quite correct.

Answer:

Several people wrote saying much the same thing and what you say is pretty well the way I understand it myself, in theory. Unfortunately, it doesn't always work that way in practice, and I don't know why. I have experienced limbo not behaving in the way you describe and I have actually erased a file and found no limbo copy. I have also found limbo copies being old copies, not the new ones and I really don't know why that happens either.

It's not just me, I've heard of this from other people too. Maybe there's a bug or something, but I have found it very much safer to treat limbo purely as a last resort facility and teach other people to do that, too. The other problem is that beginners often work on one disc, often a 180k disc, and only erase enough to give them room to work at each session, which also has quite an effect on what happens in limbo, as you said, I'd rather people left limbo alone unless they've had some sort of disaster, than relying on it, and being disappointed!

Question:

I have recently become the proud possessor of an 8256 and am gradually and painfully learning LocoScript procedures. Despite reference to the main manual, and three other books, instructions still seem very confused to me. Several things tend to drive me mad and I get error messages however many times I try the procedures.

Firstly, I haven't yet found the way to transfer a file on one disc to a Data disc. I'm using my LocoScript disc and it has far too many files.

Secondly, after loading CP/M and asking for BASIC, I just get a notice about Mallard Basic, but cannot access the Basic language or list of Basic commands and their descriptions. Since I would dearly like to begin to write my own programmes, this is a bit frustrating. I take it that Mallard Basic is 'huddled' in there somewhere, ready for use?

Finally, please, do any 8000 Plus readers have a short, simple program listing for working out Compound Interest for any capital amount, at any interest, for any term of time? I am sure this would be not only of personal use to me, but also to many other 8000 readers who enjoy your features.

Answer:

I'm not clear as to whether you are using working discs but can't transfer files, or whether you're only using one disc at all, the Start of Day disc. An awful lot of people do, at first, because they don't understand that to prepare a working disc, all you have to do is format it. Nor do you say whether you're using LocoScript 1 or 2, though I suspect the former, which may well be the cause of

your problems. There's nothing wrong with LocoScript 1 as a word processing program, though it has a few annoying habits and there are things you can't do with it which were fixed in LocoScript 2. However, I have yet to meet anyone with a good word to say about the manual. The manual with Loco2 is completely different, and very much better.

Also, if you're thinking about going on to using add-on programs in future, you'd be better using LocoScript 2 from the start. Some of them only work with LocoScript 2.

You should not be working on your LocoScript disc at all, only loading the machine with it, then taking it out. There's very little room to store files on it and, for several reasons, it's not a good idea to keep your data on the same disc as programmes files the computer needs.

If you have some new discs, you need to format them. If you're using LocoScript 1, you'll need to use Diskit on your CP/M side, but LocoScript 2 lets you do it with [F2] from the Disc Manager screen. Once they're formatted, you just put them in and work on them. If you've already figured that out and it's file transfer that's causing the bother, this is how it's done for an 8256. Put the cursor on the file you want to copy (or move, which won't leave a copy behind). Select the File function, [F3] in LocoScript 2, or [F3] Copy or [F4] Move in LocoScript 1.

You will now see a message asking you to select the destination. Take the upper cursor over to drive M, use [SHIFT] with the right hand cursor arrow, until the cursor is in one of the groups on Drive M at the right. It doesn't matter which, and it doesn't matter what the bottom file cursor is on, only the group cursor. Press [ENTER]. You will see another message, telling you the

details of the file you're copying and where it's going. If that's right, press [ENTER] again.

You'll hear some whirring noises, and you'll see the file appear in the bottom section, in that group on Drive M. Now change the disc, put your new one in, and press [F1] for LocoScript 1, [F7] for LocoScript 2.

Now, go through exactly the same procedure, only starting from drive M and going to Drive A, and you'll end up with a copy of the file on your new disc.

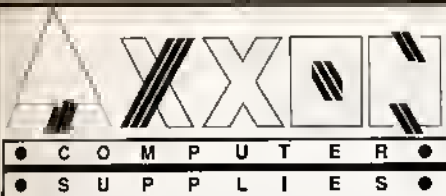
Make sure the very first thing you do is to put the file cursor on the file you want to copy or move, so that it's highlighted.



As for the BASIC manual, you used to get two books with an 8000 series machine, one of which was a BASIC manual. Apparently, you don't any more, and I don't know where you could get one. Ask around and see if you can find someone with an older PCW, or find a club, who might let you borrow one.

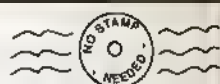
BASIC itself is still there, on side 2 of your system discs, and you are getting it to work if you're getting the Mallard message and an Ok at the bottom. But that's not much help with no manual.

It's no good just picking up any BASIC manual, although it might be better than nothing, but there are several versions of BASIC around, and they're not the same. There are different versions of Mallard, and there's the complication of Jetsam, too, so you really need the manual specific to what you're using.

You could try writing to Amsoft and see if they can still provide the BASIC book. Or perhaps someone with an older machine reading this and never using, or intending to use, BASIC may be kind enough to offer one. As for Compound Interest, can anyone help?



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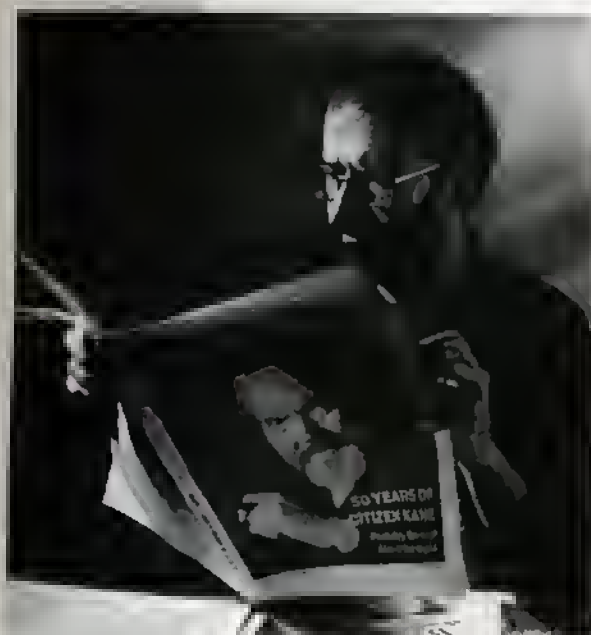
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Story Time!

Remembering tall tales and anecdotes is often the bane of a writer's life. Karen Donaghay shows you how LocoFile can make it easy



Piles and piles of paper were proving a problem for our budding journalist, 8000 Plus reader Gerald Ashton. But fortunately LocoFile can help him out. If he follows our plan of action, then next time he needs to write an article on the floundering state of the British film industry, he will know exactly where to turn

Apart from the possession a startlingly deft command of the English language, good sources are the feathers in a writer's cap. Any wordsmith, freelancer or otherwise, knows how a funny quote or a little-known fact can brighten up a dull piece, transforming a mundane essay into a salvable creation.

But have you ever wondered where these snippets come from? Are writers, by their very nature, the fount of all knowledge? Or is there a secret recipe that allows them to produce witty anecdotes and crisply appropriate phrases from thin air?

Well, if the truth be known, the answer is a mixture of skill and practice. Most writers are known to be squirrel-like creatures. They hoard away nuggets of information to drag out in times of need. The writer's intuition will decide what's worth saving and what should be thrown in the bin - but from then on, it's all down to organisation.

And that, for many writers, is the point at which LocoFile comes in. Experienced scribes come to realise that without a system it is all too easy to lose that article on the Samurai warrior or that news story about the Animated Film Festival. And the loss of that reference source is often what will distinguish the

amateur from the professional. We have recently heard from Gerald Ashton, a reader of 8000 Plus. Gerald falls somewhere between the two camps.

Although he does keep old magazine and newspaper articles to refer to later, his system could do with sorting out. He is a semi-professional writer and he wrote to us with a plea for help. Here is his situation...

"I'm not an incredibly experienced writer," Gerald told us. "I started producing the odd film review for the local newspaper and this has led to a steady stream of work. Now my aim is to be a full-time writer."

"So far, my PCW has been invaluable to me, but I want to start using it more fully. I need a filing system, for my old magazine clippings. Then, whenever I am researching a particular topic I can just type in the subject matter and get a list of all my available sources. I have a copy of LocoFile and know that I can use it to create indexes. Can you suggest the best possible method?"

We thought that we could. We studied Gerald's problem, and have come up with a method of organising his collection. Why not try it too?

STEP ONE: PLANNING A STRATEGY

Your first step in this exercise is to organise your thoughts - before you begin to employ the PCW to do all of the hard work.

Trying to file an article causes problems as it rarely fits into a one-word category. For example, an old Guardian article on the film Citizen Kane asked

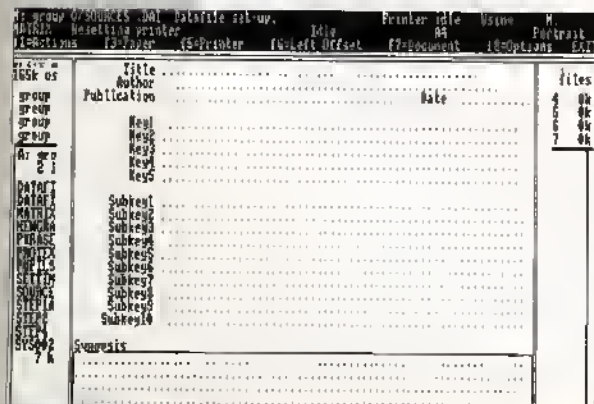
several top directors what they thought of this cinematic classic. The article includes interviews with Hanif Kureishi, Ken Loach and John Schlesinger.

So, when Gerald wants to write an article on classic films, this article could be a useful source of reference. Likewise, if he is writing an article

about Orson Welles this article may again come in useful.

What happens in practice is that each article is saved under several keywords. The article is stored under the keyword Citizen Kane, Film classic, Orson Welles and all the directors are mentioned.

STEP TWO: SETTING UP THE DATABASE



Once you have decided on how you are going to organise your articles in terms of keywords, then it is time to begin constructing your database. Setting this up as a database is easy, at least in the first instance.

Simply choose [F1] = Options from the Disc Management Screen and scroll down to the option to Create LocoFile data and press [ENTER].

Type in SOURCES.DAT as the name of the database and press

The blank LocoFile card should look like this. The card size is set to 70 by 27 and then the fields are defined in the normal way.

[ENTER] again.

The LocoFile card that appears on the screen is too small for our purposes so you will need to change the card size. Choose the F5=Card option and scroll down to Card width and type in 70 [ENTER]. Then change the card height to 27 in the same way.

Finally press [ENTER] one more time and the card is re-drawn at the larger size. Now you are ready to define the fields in the usual way. Copy them as they are shown in the screenshot on the left, then press [EXIT] to get to your first card of the database.

Over to You

Your chance to tell the world how easy LocoScript can be! Save time, space and frustration with this month's selection of readers' tips

Early warning

When working in LocoScript 2 v.2.03 recently, I was in despair because I kept getting the message **PRINTER ABSENT**, which suggested all kinds of terrible possibilities. Was the printer faulty, or not properly connected? A faulty lead cable or disc? I checked the options as far as I was able; all to no avail. Suspecting LocoScript 2 was at fault I tried a LocoScript 1 disk and everything worked just as it should. I then checked that the LocoScript 2 disc had the **MATRIX.PRI** in its programme and yes, it had. What then could be wrong? I tried another LocoScript 2 disk and had the same result: **PRINTER ABSENT**. So, I re-checked the **MATRIX.PRI** file and what do I find? It was the later version of LocoScript 2 which I must have installed when switching files! The moral and message is that early versions of LocoScript 2 are not compatible with the later versions. John Batterbee
Pierkerling

Saving styles

As one of your long time readers, I would just like to say thanks for a great mag. I have learnt more from 8000 Plus than from any of the manuals. I would like to return some of that learning, so here goes.

In July's issue several items caught my attention. In particular, LocoPlus (page 20, question 1) asked if layout templates could be copied. Your reply was a bit vague and basically said "no".

If a file is opened and called **TEMPLATE.STD**, it will of course be copied over to the much revered M Drive. However, you can cheat with standard layouts, and not just by using the usual **[F2]** option.

A layout, or set of layouts, can be stored in a **Style.fil** file. First, create a document and call it **STYLE.FIL**. Open the file, clear out any junk text and then save it.

Then edit a document, with the layout you want to keep, and copy it to block 1. Close the file by typing **[EXIT]** and **A [ENTER]** (for abandon). Copy any other layouts from other files to blocks 2, 3, 4 and so on. This will ensure that the phrase store error message will not arise.

Open the **STYLE.FIL** document, paste in block 1 and at the end hit **[ALT][RETURN]** to end the page. On page two paste in block 2 and finish as above, then paste in block 3 and so on, until you have all the layouts you want to save in the file.

Finally, press **[EXIT]** and save the file. You now have a file which contains all the document layouts. (For quick reference it might be a good idea to print out your layouts.)

When you boot up the PCW, first open the **STYLE.FIL** document. Then copy all the layout pages you require in to blocks 1 to 9 (leaving block 0 free for those block moves that we all love.)

I find that this is particularly useful for any LocoMail routines that you may want to use.

Mike Castro
Watford

Group names

When reorganising files on disc, groups previously in use are sometimes emptied and renamed as, for instance, **GROUP 6**. This can result in a cluttered disc management display such as:

```
LETTERS 56k group 4 0k
GROUP 1 0k LABELS 10k
group 2 0k group 6 0k
INVOICES 112k group 7 0k
```

I now indicate all empty groups with a #, making groups in use stand out clearly on the disc management screen.

```
LETTERS 56k #4 0k
#1 0k LABELS 10k
#2 0k #6 0k
INVOICES 112k #7 0k
```

Tony Goeke
St. Albans

Economy letters

This is the ultimate economy device for writing many letters to the same person. It only works for LocoScript 2. Just put the person's name as the filename in the appropriate group, as if you were writing a letter in the ordinary way. Your name and address must come out as part of the text, not as part of the header. It should be followed by the recipient's name and address, as is normal business practice.

When you come to write the next letter, bring up the original letter by pressing **F** and **[ENTER]**. Then use the **[COPY]** key and the **[PARA]** key to lift out your name and address, and the recipient's name and address, all in one operation. Use the **[CUT]** key to put all this in block 1 (or in any other) and go to the end of the letter. Press **[ALT][RETURN]** to force a page ending. Now press **[PASTE]** and **1** (or wherever you have put the addresses).

The addresses will come out and your new letter will be headed up. You have left the date on the original, so that you have a record of everything that was in the initial letter. Just put the new date on the new letter, and you're away.

When your letter is finished, and you have pressed **[EXIT]** and chosen to Save and print, a menu comes up with options **Print all pages** or **Print some pages**. Choose the latter by moving the cursor to it and pressing **[ENTER]**. Then type in the relevant page number for the letter you have just written, and press the **[ENTER]** key one more time to confirm your choice.

This not only saves all the memory you use up by starting a new filename for each letter, but also saves all the unnecessary repetitions of your's and the recipient's name and address.

John Rowan
Walthamstow Village

Alternative moves

Although the manual doesn't tell you this explicitly, I find that a great little feature of LocoScript is that the **[ALT]** key can be used to reverse most of the major textual movement commands, in the following way.

[ALT][DOC/PAGE] returns the cursor to the top of the page. When used together with **[SHIFT]**, it returns the cursor to the top of the document.

[SHIFT] has the same effect as setting upper case when writing text; it activates the upper symbol on the key.

[ALT][LINE/EOL] returns the cursor to the end, or the beginning, of the previous line respectively.

[ALT][UNIT/PARA] sends the cursor to the beginning of the previous paragraph, or unit, respectively.

[ALT][WORD/CHAR] lands on the previous character or word, again depending on which one you selected. Philip Shapiro
Birmingham

M drive printing

Here is a tip for readers who regularly have documents of several pages to print out and don't want to waste the time that it takes to print them.

Before starting to print the document, first copy the file onto the M drive (**[F3]** for LocoScript 2). With the cursor still on the M drive copy, follow the procedure for printing it.

You can now change discs while the file is printing (press **[F7]** each time you change), and thus work on any other documents that need to be created or edited, using as many different discs as necessary. All you have to do then is to put in another sheet and press **[EXIT]** each time the paper runs out, if you are using single sheets. If you are using continuous stationery, you only need to check that it is not misfeeding.

LocoScript allows you to do almost all the usual disc management operations whilst it is printing using the M drive, including moving a file on to that drive. I am, in fact, writing this letter whilst printing another document. According to my experiments, the only things you cannot do are to print another document at the same time, or to copy a disc. This is presumably because it would not allow enough memory space for the document you are printing. Bob Hollings
Bristol

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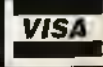
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vortex 2000

Plain Sale-ing

The life of a salesman can be a very hectic one. This month, Alec Rae looks at a new program designed to organise the busy sales executive

Salesman's Cardorganiser allows you to keep a constant record of your dealings with clients. Here, you can see how a record can be updated using the Edit option

First let's admit the obvious. There is nothing that Salesman's Cardorganiser can do that couldn't be done with a half decent database and a little imagination. In fact anyone with a reasonable grasp of BASIC could produce a similar program.

But to say that is perhaps to miss the point of a program like Salesman's Cardorganiser.

Business people generally don't buy a computer as a hobby. They want to switch the machine on and be using it as easily and as quickly as a TV or a record player. (We won't say as quickly as a video recorder because there is still a large percentage of the VCR owning public that still don't know how to record a programme when they aren't there.) As such, the program certainly tries to be sheer simplicity.

From the fact that it is self loading to the fact that it arrives complete with its own cardbox and printing paper shows that there has been some thought

put in to trying to make life easy for the business user uninterested in the mechanics of using a PCW.

The fact that it fails to live up to this promise in a number of important respects is often more a problem of presentation than of programming.

With a more approachable manual and certainly with more on-screen prompts the program could fill an important niche in the market.

Get organised!

There are other card index programs that allow you to collect the details of all your contacts neatly and logically. But where Salesman's Cardorganiser wins is that it tries to force some sort of organisation on the user.

Sales personnel are often the worst people to be involved in a sales set-up. The very skills and attributes that make them good in a selling situation often make them totally unsuited for the day to day grind of administration.

Anything that encourages sales staff to keep an ordered, logical record of contacts would be regarded as an improvement by most sales managers. What Salesman's Cardorganiser does is to present the user with a ready made card index system. On this you can record company name, address, contacts names and telephone numbers, details of what products the customer is interested in and notes on the history of your company's dealings with the client.

All these details are undoubtedly useful. Problems when, say, new sales people are appointed to an area or when a key member of staff was ill would be greatly reduced with this kind of background to hand.

And, perhaps more importantly, it introduces a system which should make sure that customers are not forgotten and regular contact is kept up. This is done through a series of printed reports which you can control.

For instance, you can specify a date when you next need to call up a particular client. Then at the correct moment you will have a printed report to remind you to do it.

Or if you are paying a visit to a town you can call up all the customers in area or even street to help to allow you to set up other appointments, making the best use of your time. Or you could print out a list of the people you have to telephone urgently, or people who are awaiting deliveries.

Prompt replies?

Admittedly the program is not the fastest thing on a floppy disc. It is written in BASIC, which makes it that bit slower than, for instance, a machine code program. It also has a number of what seem to be unnecessary prompts. If you choose the option to enter a new card ➤

Counting the weeks

The major failing of Salesman's Cardorganiser is undoubtedly the way it organises the timing of your next call. As you update the card you can enter a time for next call – an admirable idea.

Unfortunately you have to do this by entering a week number (from 1 to 52) and the year. All the week numbers for all the years up to 1994 are listed in the manual. But if the makers think a salesman will keep the Salesman's Cardorganiser manual next to their hearts for the next three years they are liable to be disappointed. Computers are ideal for holding and regurgitating fiddly details like what the dates are of the 23rd week of 1992. Or even why not simplify it by saying the call has to be made in the first week in September. Unless a simpler and more sensible method can be found to organise the numbering of weeks this feature will be useless.

PARANOIA RULES

An interesting insight into the psychology of the salesman is shown in this program's Password option – a feature that is supposed to immobilise the program while you are not there. This is to stop prying eyes (your ruthlessly ambitious colleagues in the office, presumably) seeing details of your contacts and muscling in on your most valued clients.

In Salesman's Cardorganiser, with a couple of keystrokes you can clear the screen until the correct password is

entered. This may well appeal to salesmen (a paranoid breed at the best of times). But it doesn't take into account the fact that someone with only the most basic understanding of a PCW would be able to get all the information they wanted from the data file in something like 30 seconds.

And it doesn't protect against some cunning arch-rival doing something fiendishly cunning like quitting from the program and re-loading. Don't depend on too much protection from this feature.

The rather precarious password system in action, keeping prying eyes away

Buy the way

Salesman's Cardorganiser was devised by Southampton-based salesman John Grayson. It is his first foray into the world of vertical software, and as such, is an impressive attempt. If you are interested in the program, why not contact John at 4 Byron Court, Hill Lane, Southampton, Hampshire SO1 5RY, telephone (0703) 220242. The program will cost approximately £50.00.

On the up

For those of you who are not familiar with the term, vertical software is that which is written for a highly specific market. The most famed producers of vertical software for the PCW are Cavalier, who produce Taxi and Re-chord, among others!

Salesman's Cardorganiser

Pluses

- ▲ It is a complete package
- ▲ It does try to be easy to use
- ▲ It does try to organise the naturally unorganised

Minuses

- ▼ The manual doesn't do its job
- ▼ It is quite slow
- ▼ You can't use continuous paper

Features	3/5
Documentation	1/5
Performance	2/5
Ease of use	4/5

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2

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Sammy Slaughterman Manager 0278 123456
Fred Twofingers S/Man 0278 554321

Fax: 0278 666993

Wks: Yr:1991 Priority: 1

you really don't need another prompt asking "Proceed with option?" An on-screen prompt telling you how to cancel the command would have been much more useful.

But this is perhaps a little unfair. It is pretty obvious that a salesman is not going to carry his PCW round in the ear looking up addresses. The effectiveness of the program will be in his output – the hard copies of addresses and the reports on which calls have to be made.

Here you have both the strengths and the failings of the program. The package comes complete with packs of paper, an attractive dark blue writing paper, cut to the right size to fit into the cardbox provided. The paper will also fit in a plastic folder for easy transportation in a briefcase.

This is great – everything you need to get started in one package. The only trouble is that the whole system is tied in to this paper. While the paper is attractive it is not particularly outstanding in any way other than it is slightly less than A5.

Continuous options?

It seems logical to assume that, once that initial supply of paper has been used up, many users would find it a real nuisance to re-order this paper. In fact ordinary continuous paper would be far more sensible for most uses.

But using continuous paper is made very difficult because the program assumes that a new sheet of paper will be fed in every time it ends a page. Even with continuous paper in place it will stop and give a 'Waiting for Paper' error message in the print menu (press the [PTR] key). Assuring the machine that it really does have paper is frustrating for someone that knows what they are doing and it would be a complete mystery to the PCW illiterate salesman the program is apparently aimed at.

Even when you get a print out it is sometimes not as useful as you might want. Admittedly it prints out the 'cards' quite attractively. But one of the great selling features of the program is a phone list – telling you all the phone calls you have to do in a certain week (see Counting the Weeks in the margin).

But instead of printing out a list of names and telephone numbers – a remarkably simple piece of programming you would think – it

simply lists the card numbers that are due, leaving you to call up those cards or go through your cardbox to find out who to call. A similar confusion reigns over the question of priorities. At the top of each card is a useful little section where you can classify a card as being 'Urgent', 'Needs Contact', 'Can Wait', 'Keep for Reference' and 'Awaiting Delivery'.

Nowhere in the manual is this feature fully explained (not really surprising as the manual fails to explain anything fully) and you are left wondering if this ties up with the Search feature where you can list cards in an area or needing a call in a certain week by priority 1 to 5.

This is not to say that most people with two brain cells to rub together couldn't work out these little details without the help of a manual.

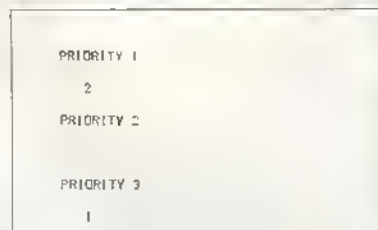
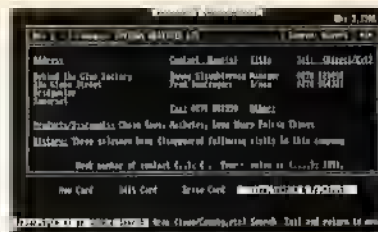
But, believe it or not, even in this day and age there are people who like to have a manual that explains how the program works.

Nowhere, for instance, does it tell you the relatively interesting fact that, to use Salesman's Cardorganiser, you will need a PCW with two drives.

The data files are automatically saved on to drive B.

BASIC lack of information

And when you quit the program it, rather carelessly leaves you in BASIC instead of CP/M. Right, it is a self loading program. You put the disc in the drive,



Left: An example of the card index print out
Top: The choice of print outs, including the rather confusing priorities.
Bottom: The disappointingly sparse telephone list printout.

switch on the machine and the program loads automatically.

It might be safe to assume that the majority of users of the program will therefore not be really interested in CP/M or the prospect of loading another program. But it wouldn't have hurt to simply mention that if you want to load another program in CP/M type "system" at the prompt.

Fatal attraction

Not only does this manual fail to come up with the goods, it doesn't present what it does tell you in a particularly attractive or particularly accessible way.

And then you are left with the dilemma that if you give up on the manual altogether you will miss the page with all the interesting key strokes (including how to quit from the program). This is pretty important because there are no on-screen prompts to give you a clue as to key strokes and they are not totally obvious.

All in all Salesman's Organiser is a basically sound idea; it is a brave attempt at producing vertical software. It is spoilt by some carelessness and a lack of attention to detail. If it really is aimed at PCW-illiterate business user it needs to be a lot more user friendly.

PCW – THE FORGOTTEN BUSINESS TOOL

Perhaps one of the great mysteries of the world is why the PCW is so under-used as a business tool. When it first appeared on the market it seemed logical to assume that in a few years wherever you once found a typewriter there would soon find a PCW or a similar word processor.

The PCW has found a niche – but a niche mainly with writers and small businesses. Big business has consistently ignored the PCW and chosen the IBM compatible PC.

Obviously PCs can outperform the PCW in many ways. But as most personal computers in offices are still used for little more than word processing (a task the PCW is more than

adequate for) it still means that businesses are spending several times more on computers than they need.

What the PC does have, however, is a literally vast software base. While there are a few programs performing roughly similar tasks as Salesman's Organiser there are probably thousands of programs aimed at organising sales staff, vying with each other to present themselves as the easiest and most sensible way of performing the task.

It would be interesting to see if programs that went out of their way to make life easy for the business user (instead of assuming that the poor soul has a degree in computer science) would catch on for the PCW.

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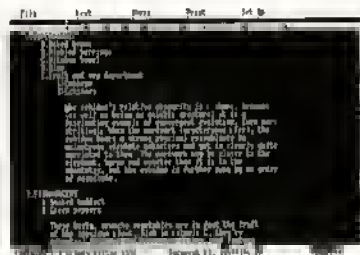
Above all, Flipper 3 is easy to use. There's a menu system to make things simple, and a thorough manual to keep them that way. Even installing Flipper 3 is easy: it comes on a self-booting disk which you can back up and use immediately.

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Foreword can share memory with Locoscript 2 or CP/M, letting you switch backwards and forwards in just 1 second. It can take up as little as 112K of memory, or as much as your PCW has got. It can edit up to eight documents at once. It works with Flipper 2 Plus and Flipper 3. It's easy to install and use, with a 40-page manual that caters for beginners and experts alike. No wonder 8000 Plus magazine rated Foreword 20/20!

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Totally Clips!

This month's cover feature looked at how to choose clip art packages – now, we show you how to use the clip art supplied with MicroDesign 2

MicroDesign 2 is a powerful graphics tool. You can – with even a small amount of artistic ability and a bit of practice – produce very effective illustrations using the freehand and shape drawing features of the program.

But this is a technique that has to be learned – a time consuming business.

If your hudget doesn't stretch to a scanner or digitiser how do you provide the pictures for your page? How do you produce illustrations for your text without going through the tedious process of learning to draw on a computer screen?

The answer is, of course, clip art. Other people, who have learned the techniques of drawing using on a computer screen, have slaved over a hot mouse to give you a variety of readily accessible, professional looking illustrations to adorn your page.

There are problems however. MicroDesign 2 does come with a fair selection of clip art. But, even with a choice of 46 images you get with the program (11 area files and 35 cut files), you will still be lucky to find more than one or two that are ideally suited to your purposes. If you are designing a magazine or newsletter on a specialised subject then you may not find anything in the collection to suit.

This is not to say that the CT collection is limited. There are a few more specialised discs of clip art available from Creative Technology (most notably the maps and images suitable for Church magazines) and the program is certainly versatile enough to handle most of the clip art available for other programs on the PCW.

But even if you bought every piece of clip art currently on the market, if you are churning out a club or society magazine on a regular basis your readers are still going to get pretty bored with your illustrations.

All change!

This is where a bit of creativity is needed. And luckily, MicroDesign 2 is crammed with ingenious graphics features which can be used to alter, adapt and change your clip art.

The change in question could be as simple as reversing the picture or putting it against a different background. In fact by clever use of loading a file on to different backgrounds (or over itself)

RETURN OF THE PAPER SELLER

The first desk top publishing - Newsdesk International from Electric Studio - came complete with clip art, including a rather useful picture of a news vendor. This news vendor soon became famous in the 8000 Plus office as every proud new owner of the program found a new and interesting use for the image and (for some reason) sent it in to us.

using the different modes for loading you can get some spectacular effects.

This is where the EXOR mode (the third box in the top row of the EXTRA menu) really becomes useful. EXOR is where a pixel reverses the colour of the pixel it lands on. So if you load an image on to a solid or patterned background, you immediately get an interesting 'reversed' effect.

The Great Flood

The Flood command – the ability to flood an area of the screen with black or a pattern is also very useful for this purpose. One interesting feature of MicroDesign 2 is that you can flood the area of the Design screen – forming a very effective solid box around your clip art image.

The only thing you need to remember here is to make sure the outline of the clip art object is solid or the flood command will fill up any white space inside the image itself. The simple way to do this is to go round the outside of the object using the Zoom facility. It is amazing how what looks like a solid outline can appear a bit more like a sieve when you look at it blown up in size several times in the Zoom box.

One advantage of using these graphics features is that they can turn a realistic image into a more 'artistic' graphic image – suitable for a masthead or page heading.

And, of course, you could completely redraw a piece of clip art, taking out bits that you don't want and even adding simple details.

This is not as difficult as it sounds. A great deal of the extraneous detail can be wiped out by using the paint facility.

Pick a small brush and put the paint colour to white (well, light green, to be

totally accurate) and you can clear great swathes of the screen in minutes.

Soft spray

If you prefer, you can 'soften up' areas of detail by using one of the spray paint brushes to spray black or white paint over the area in question. You simply use the black paint to darken down light parts of the picture and the white paint to brighten up the dark parts. Couldn't be more logical!

Either way you can soften the detail of the image without obscuring the outline. This effect can also produce quite realistic light and shade giving a depth to a picture where it is sometimes missing in clip art.

It is even possible to spray a pattern on to the page, giving some interesting effects. If you choose a regular pattern (as in the second set of icons) you can get good grey scales. But if you use one of the icons as the pattern you can get some subtle or amusing results.

Whatever effects you do get, make sure to print out the illustration before you go on to design the rest of the page. Because of the size of the image on screen and the extra detail that the screen resolution gives you it is often possible that something that looks fantastic on screen turns out like the Blob out on a dark night on paper.

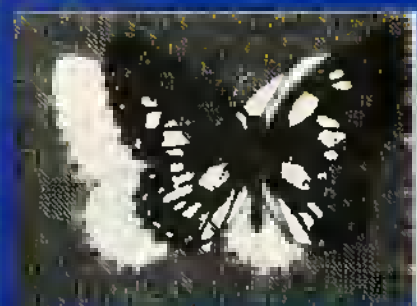
Big is beautiful

One cure for this is often blowing the image up to as bigger size as possible. If you are looking for the image to fill a specific area you can do this with the Rescale option in the Block command although it is very easy to distort a picture using this method.

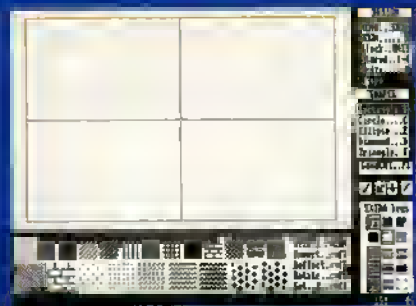
It is safer to save the picture as an area file (SaveAREA in the Layout section) and then reload it using the double size option. If you do this, be prepared to do a bit of work in Zoom taking any unsightly stepping effects out of curves and diagonal lines.

Sometimes images can increase in size very effectively but more often than not, they do need the final touches putting back the detail that has been lost in increasing the size.

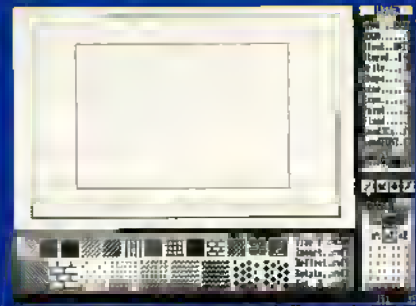
But the first place to start is having a look to see what clip art you have available. Load any .CUT files you think you might be interested in on a blank page and print it out to see what they look like on paper.



1 Inspecting the collection



2 Drawing a background box



3 Loading the image

1 Some interesting effects can be achieved by loading the same image over itself. Here we have an original way of presenting our old favourite - the Butterfly .CUT file.

This is found on the MicroDesign 2 .CUT file disc called, with some predictability CUTS. Here you can find 35 files of varying standard and usefulness. There is sure to be some suitable Image for you here.

The only limitation on a .CUT tile is that it should be no bigger than can be contained on the screen in the Design section. However, once saved, it can be loaded at double size in the Layout section by pressing [F1] for LoadAREA and then [F1] to choose the area type.

Press [S] to pick .CUT files and [RETURN]. Then load as normal from the choice of files on the disc, remembering of course to press [EXTRA] and [UNIT] before loading to get it at x2 (double size)

2 First move to the Design section ([D] and [RETURN]) and draw the box to contain the background. This will eventually be filled with a pattern but, for the moment, what we really want is an empty box slightly bigger than the .CUT file it has to contain.

Pressing [S] for Shapes and [R] for Rectangle will provide you with an adjustable box on screen. Use [EXCH] to flip between the centre, the top right and bottom left corner. This allows you to adjust the size of the box, dragging the corners out, using the cursor keys until the box nearly fills the screen.

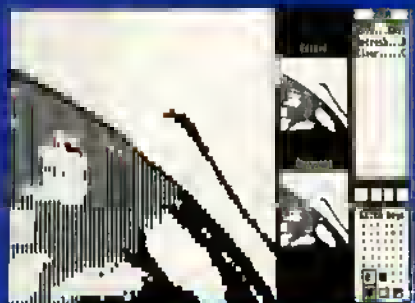
Check to see that none of the boxes in the [EXTRA] menu are highlighted. If so this will produce an empty box.

Pressing [EXTRA] and [DDC] chooses you a rectangle filled with white which will obliterate anything which was on the screen underneath it. Press [RETURN] and it is fixed

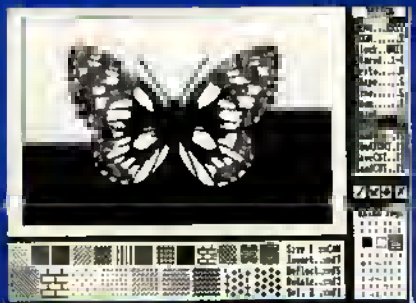
3 Now to load the .CUT file. If you have the CUTS disc in drive A, all you need to do is press [F1] for LoadCUT and [RETURN] to see what .CUT tiles you have available. If your disc is in B drive press [F1] and [ALT] and [B] at the same time to switch to that drive. Then [RETURN] shows you all the choices on B.

Normally you could use the cursor keys to pick the .CUT file of your dreams. But this time just use back [DEL] (to delete the star) and type in BUTTRFLY.CUT (don't computers spell butterfly strangely?). Then [RETURN] will produce a box on screen to show you the size of the .CUT file.

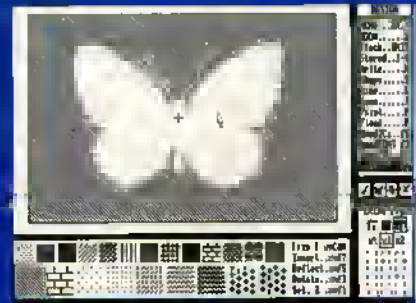
At this time [EXTRA] and [COPY] gives you transparent mode (it won't cover up anything already on the screen) or [EXTRA] and [CUT] is opaque mode which does obliterate everything underneath. Move the box to the middle of your rectangle and press [RETURN].



4 Filling in the background



5 Choosing a pattern



6 Over-printing

4 We want to fill in the background with a pattern using the Flood command. This fills any space until it comes to a solid black line. So the problem here is that if there is not a solid line round the outside of the image, it will fill the inside of the butterfly as well as the background. This must be avoided.

Although the butterfly looks as if it has a solid black line round it, the outline is actually broken in three or four places - especially at the top of the wings. This may not be obvious at first.

Use Zoom [Z] and go round the outside of the picture filling any gaps that you find. Remember, pressing [EXTRA] and [RELAY] means that any pixel you click on goes black.

Pressing [EXTRA] and the downward cursor key will turn any pixel to white.

Try to resist the temptation to change the picture too much as this will only mean extra work for you later on.

5 Now to pick a pattern for the background. This will normally mean changing the choice of icons in the bottom window - [EXTRA] and [F1] to get Set 2 - the patterns.

Pick one by pressing [RELAY] and moving the box with the cursor keys. Press [RETURN] when the correct pattern is highlighted. Remember you can use these patterns at half size or double size by pressing [EXTRA] and [CAN].

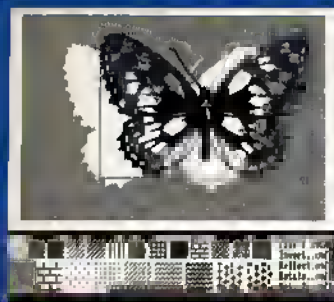
Then press F (for Flood). Choose the pattern fill [EXTRA] and [UNIT], move the crosshair cursor to an open area of background (inside the box, of course) and press [RETURN].

It will fill all the area it can get to with black and then change to the chosen pattern. This is where you can find out if you have missed a gap in the outline. If things go wrong press [STOP] and then [WORD], use Zoom to find and fill in the gap and start again.

6 Now we overprint the Butterfly image with itself, but this time we use EXOR mode. This, in layman's terms, simply gives a reverse image of your .CUT file. It reverses the colour of any pixel it lands on (a black pixel becomes white).

You could load a .CUT file on to a black background to give an interesting reverse image which is useful. But here, by loading a reversed image on to a positive image we simply remove all the pixels that make up the butterfly - leaving the white, outline shape.

Load the .CUT file, as before. Because we type in BUTTRFLY.CUT the last time it comes up on the screen as the first choice. Press [EXTRA] and [UNIT] for EXOR mode and then line the box up as closely as possible with the existing Butterfly image. Press [RETURN] and the butterfly will virtually disappear. The only blemishes should be the bits of the outline you filled in. Use Zoom to wipe these out.



7 Building up the image



8 Using the map



9 Isolating sections

7 You could save the white outline as an image itself ([F2] SaveCUT and choose a file name) or you can go on to embellish this with another copy of the Butterfly Image. Call up LoadCUT as before but this time use transparent mode - [[EXTRA] end [COPY].

Then place the box offset slightly from the white outline and press [RETURN]. And there you have a 3-D effect of the butterfly flying off the page. A similar technique will give you an effective drop shadow for any picture. At this size it might be on the small size for an effective illustration. But save it with SaveCUT and load it in Layout using the LoadAREA method at double size (see step 1) and it will be quite impressive. You can add text by printing it on a blank piece of screen and then Copying it (using the Block command [UNIT] and [EXTRA] and [PASTE] for transparent mode) on to a light part of the picture.

8 There is one image that MicroDesign is not short of - the map. There are even a couple of special clip art discs dedicated to maps. Maps can be very useful for locating places. But, with a little Imagination, they can also be used graphically to produce eye-catching page headings or logos.

This time we are looking for one of the .MDA area files called Globes. It is found on the MicroDesign 2 disc marked Icons and Areas. It gives you six different views of the world including one (in the top right hand corner) showing North and South America. Load the file in the usual way in the Layout section. Press [F1] LoadAREA and choose the name GLOBES.MDA. Remember if you have been loading .CUT files use this method to press [F1] and [1] to get back to .MDA files. Press [D] for Design and move the box into the top right hand corner of the area and press [RETURN].

9 Use the Block command to box off and then remove any parts of the other globes that come into the picture - [UNIT] adjust the box as usual, [RETURN] and [RETURN]. Press [RELAY] to disappear the bottom window if you want more room. Then draw a line right across the screen. Press [L] and place the crosshair cursor on one side of the screen. Press [RETURN] and use the cursor keys to move it right across the screen. [RETURN] fixes the line.

Choose [F] for Flood and move the crosshair cursor into open space above the line. Choose the black fill ([EXTRA] and [EXCH]) and press [RETURN] to fill in the background in black. This will only [F]lood down to the line.

Press [RELAY] to bring back the bottom window and choose a pattern to fill in North America.

Again, use [F]lood, placing the cursor within the outline of the country.



10 Tidying the image



11 Image adaptation



12 Finishing touches

10 Use Block and erase to remove everything in the picture below the line (well it was only North America we were interested in anyway) and then use [P]aint to remove any more details that we don't want.

[P] for paint will change the cursor to a paint brush. If you want to change the shape of the brush press [EXTRA] and [RELAY] to get the choice of brushes in the bottom window and [RELAY] to choose the one you want. [EXTRA] and [DOC] paints in White paint - In other words it wipes out anything shown in black pixels.

With a bit of careful mouse work you can remove the line and any extraneous detail in the picture you don't need.

Again this might be a bit small for practical purposes but by saving it as a .CUT file and loading in Layout at double size you could easily add text against the background. Against this background, the text will come out as white.

11 Another specialist set of clip art discs produced by CT is the Parish Magazine Library - two discs packed with pictures suitable for church magazines.

Although some Images are obviously very specialised there are many that could be used (or could be adapted) for general use. For instance on side two of the first disc there is an .MDA file called Autumn showing a tree losing its leaves. But you could turn this into a general picture of a tree that looks quite different from the original. Again use [P]aint and white paint [EXTRA] and [DOC] to paint out any background you don't want. [EXTRA] and [RELAY] gives you a choice of brushes. Choose one of the small spray paint brushes and start painting in light (white paint - [EXTRA] and [DOC]) and shade (black paint - [EXTRA] and [EXCH]) on the tree trunk and branches. The left hand side of the picture is the original - the right side the modified version.

12 But for a really artistic effect why not add in your own falling leaves? [EXTRA] and the downward cursor keys gives you the patterns choice and use [EXTRA] and [F1] to get to Set one - the choice of all the little icons.

Press [RELAY] and move the box over the leaf icon. Keep pressing [EXTRA] and [CAN] until you get x - half size.

[EXTRA] and [UNIT] will allow you to paint in pattern. Now, whenever you spray paint, you will be spraying hundreds of little leaf patterns.

Obviously leaves growing on a tree will not all grow in neat rows all pointing in the same direction. So, every so often use [EXTRA] and [F3] to rotate the Image (you can get four different angles).

You can overspray parts you have previously done with leaves at a different angle or you can overspray in black or white paint to give a light and shade effect to the foliage.

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The Great Divide

Send your files on a transfer trip from PCW to PC! Karen Donaghay looks at two simple solutions to the eternal link-up problem

LOCALINK

The LocoLink package includes a cable, a manual and the PCW LocoLink disc. It costs £29.95. If you already have LocoLink, an upgrade costs £14.95.

To run the program you also need version 1.5 of LocoScript PC. The entire program costs £125, whereas the upgrade to version 1.5 costs either £15.00 or £35.00 (depending on when you bought your first version).

If you want to edit LocoScript PC documents on your PCW, you can do this using LocoScript 2, version 2.3. An upgrade costs £14.95.

All of these prices are exclusive of VAT. For further details on the LocoLink, contact Locomotive Software on (0306) 740606.

Installation

Installing the cable is as easy as pie! One end plugs on to the expansion port of the

PCW and the other plugs into the parallel port of the PC.

Then, to set up LocoLink on the PCW, simply switch on and put a copy of the master disc into the A drive. It is self-booting and comes up with a LocoLink menu. At the other end, things look even easier. Just load LocoScript PC in the usual way.

The only possible snag at this stage is that you need the most recent version of LocoScript PC - version 1.5.

TRANSFERRING FILES

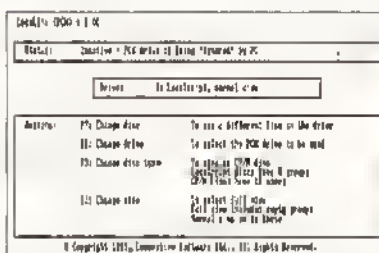
A bit of lateral thinking came into play here. Locomotive have excelled themselves by allowing you to make transfers in the most familiar way possible. One command that every LocoScript user will recognise is the Copy file command. It is used on a daily basis, to move a file from one place to another. So, Locomotive thought, why not use the same command to copy from the PCW to the PC?

They have made this possible by displaying the contents of the PCW drive on the LocoScript PC Disc Manager. Or, to get down to the nitty-gritty, the PCW drive is shown as drive Z on the PC.

At the other end of the cable is a very simple PCW menu, shown in the first screenshot. This allows you to choose what is displayed on the PC screen. You can change the PCW disc or the PCW drive by pressing [F7] or [F5]. You may also choose to display empty user groups on the PC screen, or show the 16 user groups recognised by CP/M, rather than 8 LocoScript groups.

Whatever drive you choose to display at the PCW end, it will always be treated as the Z drive by the PC. When you change disc (or drive) you need to inform LocoScript PC by choosing the option to Update all drives. This is normal practice within LocoScript PC, so you should be familiar with the process. In fact, it is probably fair to say that you will need to get to grips with the basics of LocoScript PC before you can use LocoLink effectively.

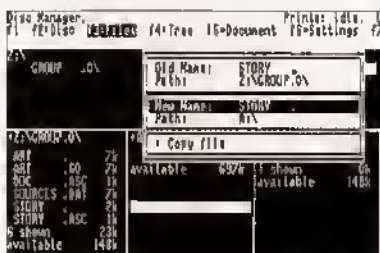
The main command that you will use is an easy one. Files are copied from the PC to the PCW, or vice versa, simply by using the Copy file option. Because the PCW files are displayed as



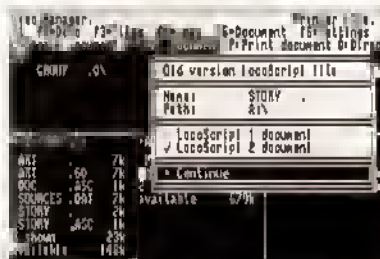
The PCW screen offers a number of simple choices. The most important options are to change the PCW disc or select a new drive

ordinary files, on what the PC thinks is a normal drive, this is done in the usual way. One big advantage of the new LocoLink is its ability to convert from one version of LocoScript to another. Any LocoScript 1 or LocoScript 2 document will be converted as soon as you try to edit the document on the PC. The reverse is true for LocoScript PC documents, provided you edit them using version 2.3 of LocoScript 2. (If not, you can always convert them into ASCII format and read them in as ASCII documents using LocoScript 1 or 2.) Another card up the LocoLink sleeve is that LocoFile documents can also be transferred intact over to LocoScript PC.

This doesn't rule out other files. LocoLink will quite happily transfer an



The file called STORY.ASC is copied from the PCW (shown as drive Z) to the PC. The standard Copy file command is used



Editing the LocoScript 2 document on the PC is easy. LocoScript PC does the conversion for you, automatically!

ASCII file, or any other sort of data. But LocoScript transfers are where it excels. The clever use of the LocoScript PC menu and the automatic conversions make LocoLink a real winner!

THE BAD OLD DAYS

Those of you who have the first version of LocoLink may feel a little bemused by this review. This is more than the average upgrade. This is a complete re-write of the original program.

One big change is that you can now send files from PC to PCW. The first version of LocoLink could only send files one way, from PCW to PC. Also, the old

version of LocoLink was run from CP/M. The new PCW disc is self-booting. Last but not least, you are now copying files using the LocoScript PC copying command. For those of you who have got used to the old LocoLink command lines (LLPC followed by a path name) this will be the real eye-opener. Now you can transfer files without leaving LocoScript.

Easy PC

We used the Amstrad PPC as our guinea pig PC system. It is actually a machine that is ideal to combine with the PCW. It is portable, so it can be used on the move, bringing it back to home base - and the PCW - for the final editing and printing out. As for other PCs, there should be no problem. As long as you have LocoScript PC on the machine in question then LocoLink can provide the transfer. Wysiwyg is equally versatile, just make sure that you have a serial port to plug the cable into.

Mention the words "transfer program" and many of you - up and down the country - will be forced to stifle a yawn. Programs linking the PCW and PC are not exactly renowned for their exciting design.

In fact, transfer packages are often the epitome of the unfriendly program. You may well know the scenario. Firstly, there is a lengthy command to type in before the transfer can begin. And then, if you can't remember the command,

you're out of luck. There are no memory joggers in the form of menus or prompts. And forget about the manual. It is normally packed to the brim with technical jargon.

Even Locomotive, who are famed for their friendly programs, managed to produce the first version of LocoLink - without a menu in sight. But that's all set to change. There are now not just one, but two user-friendly programs for you to choose from.

The new version of LocoLink provides a neat solution to the problem by using the familiar LocoScript PC menu to direct the transfer. But LocoLink was not on its own for long. Within weeks of its release, a new rival appeared on the scene. The other transfer program, called WYSIWYG, claimed to offer an equally helpful system.

But which one really is the easiest? We decided to compare the two programs, in search of a simple solution.

WYSIWYG

WYSIWYG comes complete with a manual, two programs discs for the PC and the PCW, plus the serial cable. If you do not have a serial interface then you will also need to buy this.

WYSIWYG, without the interface, costs £34.04 plus VAT. If you do not already own the interface, buying it alongside the rest of the package costs £69.70 plus VAT. The number to ring for more details is Logi'Slick on (0480) 861224

Installation

WYSIWYG is also very easy to set up. Once again, the cable is supplied with the program, but this time you will need to attach an interface to the PCW expansion port. Always remember to turn your PCW off before carrying this out. The cable is then plugged into the serial port of the interface, with the other end being attached to the serial port of your PC. You need to follow some very basic instructions to create a

boot-up disc for the PCW side. You should also create a copy of the master disc for the PC. To run the program, boot-up the PCW. Then insert the PC disc into that machine and simply type in the program's name: WYSIWYG. This rather long acronym actually stands for What You See Is What You Get, and it is wise to repeat this parrot fashion when you are typing it in. If you don't, you will soon find it a very easy name to get wrong.

TRANSFERRING FILES

Default Drive - (A)

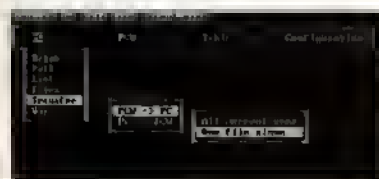
SENDING : STORY.ASC -- 5 Block(s)

Transferring block ----- 1

The PCW status box lets you know when you've made contact with the other side



Which PCW drive is under the spotlight? This is where you tell WYSIWYG what to expect



The files are sent on their way, by simply choosing the option to Transfer

WYSIWYG also plumps for the menu-driven approach. It has a PC menu from which every aspect of the transfer is controlled. All that is shown on the PCW screen is a simple status box (shown in our first screenshot).

The other side - the PC - is a different story. There are four pull-down menus. These are explained very thoroughly in the manual but the most important options are as follows.

To transfer a file, you must first tell the PC which drive to access on the PCW. To do this, you need to pull-down the PCW menu and choose the option Drive. Pick the appropriate letter as shown in our second screenshot. You then specify which type of file you want to transfer. This is done via the Table menu and you will be given the choice of LocoScript 1 or 2, CP/M files and so-called 'Neutral' files.

Finally, you can use the cursor keys to move over to the PC menu and choose

to Transfer, as shown in the last screenshot. You can transfer files either way. A nice touch is that you are allowed to view all of the PCW files on-screen, before you choose which one you want to transfer.

LocoScript files, of any description, must be converted to ASCII format, (this is an option available in all versions of LocoScript - it is hidden under the Disc Manager's [F7] in LocoScript 1 and [F1] in LocoScript 2. This allows you to edit them once they are in their new environment.

One small annoyance with the program is that if you choose to transfer a whole disc by mistake, there is no way of ending the process. You have to resort to emergency measures - reaching for the off button - to make it stop. But, once you have got used to the quirks of the system, it is easy to use. All of the steps are quite simple, but they must be adhered to rigidly. For example, if you try to transfer files without specifying the PCW drive, nothing will happen.

The most efficient way to use WYSIWYG is to set up your own configuration. Choose which directory you want to use on the PC (choose the Drive and Path options in the PC menu.) You may also wish to choose a conversion type from the Table menu. All of these settings can then be saved by opting for the Save option from the Configuration menu. These options will become your default set-up the next time you load the program.

In general, WYSIWYG offers you all you need, although it has to be said that the actual transfers tend to be a little on the slow side. The menus are a major bonus and WYSIWYG is a definite improvement on many of the more primitive file transfer systems.

SUMMARY

WYSIWYG and LocoLink both break new ground for PC to PCW transfers. Ease of use is a top priority, and each program achieves this in its own way.

If you are already using LocoScript PC then your obvious choice is LocoLink. There is no need to convert your LocoScript files into ASCII format and this makes the process more straightforward. LocoLink also has the edge over WYSIWYG in terms of general speed and simplicity.

However, if you don't want to splash out on a new copy of LocoScript PC, then WYSIWYG could prove a more economical solution. Admittedly, the interface is not terribly cheap, but many

people need a serial/parallel interface for other purposes, such as to attach a printer. For those who have an interface already, this is a very likely solution. You do need to convert LocoScript files into ASCII format before you can transfer them, but if you are using a PC word processor, such as WordStar, you will have to do this anyway.

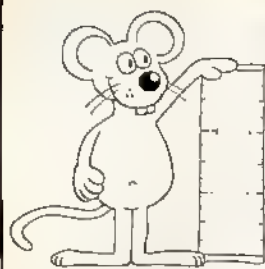
In short, the use of menus makes WYSIWYG and LocoLink two of the best transfer systems around. WYSIWYG could well be the answer for those who have no interest in LocoScript PC. LocoLink, on the other hand, is the one that devoted LocoScript fans are sure to go for in their droves!

Cross over

Both WYSIWYG and LocoLink can transfer any kind of file, but you must check that you can use the files on both machines. Most spreadsheets, databases and word processors can read ASCII files, so these are a fairly safe bet. But programs that run on the PCW cannot be run on the PC - at least, not without the support of a lot of other software - and neither can COM files. Similarly, you won't get your MS/DOS programs running on the PCW.

The feeling's neutral

The choice to transfer a neutral file refers to those files that are specialised data files, in particular binary files. Textual files would fall into the category of LocoScript 1 or 2 files or, as in the case of Protext files, they would be described as ASCII.



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From time to time I'm expected to do the decent thing and reveal the ultimate secret of literary success. Unfortunately there are hindrances to such altruism....

The first is that if I had the Secret, I wouldn't be disclosing it here but would be lolling in luxury atop the best-seller list. (Which in the present recession might not mean much. Someone recently revealed that one of the "top 100 bestsellers" in a particular chart had sold precisely one copy.) It's like those programs that tell you how to grow rich by betting on horses ... you wonder why a programmer with this Midas touch is bothering to sell software for trifling sums, and why thousands of bookies aren't going bankrupt. Perhaps they buy these packages too, and use them to adjust the odds.

The second snag is that there is no one literary Secret. Instead there are hordes of small insights, none particularly valuable alone. Think of chess, whose rules are far simpler than those of English grammar and which (mathematically) allows ridiculously few possible games when compared with the number of legitimate ways of arranging words into a book. Yet even there the Big Secret is unknown, apart from platitudes like "Play better than the other guy." There are rules of thumb: aim for control of the centre, avoid doubled pawns, etc. But ultimately you have to win by playing well, which seems undefinable. Like writing well.

Learn by example

This month we study another little facet of writing — in fact an ancient and powerful literary technique which you never see mentioned in creative writing manuals. Here's a textbook example from Britain's most prolific science fiction writer, Robert Lionel Fanthorpe:

... The silence was broken by metallic noises. Harsh clanking, jarring metallic noises. Things were stirring within the disc ship. Strange metallic things; things that were alien to the soft green grass of earth.

Terrifying things, steel things: metal things; things with cylindrical bodies and multitudinous jointed limbs. Things without flesh and blood. Things that were made of metal and plastic and transistors and valves and relays, and wires. Metal things. Metal things that could think. Thinking metal things.

*Terrifying in their strangeness, in their peculiar metal efficiency. Things the like of which had never been seen on the earth before. Things that were sliding back panels.... Robots! Robots were marching ... Robots were marching ... (from *March of the Robots*, 1961)*

Yes, the literary technique we're talking about is padding. Appalling passages like the above are favourites for readings at SF conventions, attracting the same groan-laden interest as the immortal verse of William McGonagall. Hypnotized by dreadfully predictable rhythms, audiences have been known to

chant along: "The city slept. Men slept. Women slept. Children slept. Dogs and cats slept." (*Ibid.*)

In justice to Fanthorpe, I should point out that he was and is an engaging, intelligent fellow. What forced him to these extremes was the job of providing the entire SF/fantasy output of the ill-famed Badger Books, in his spare time: 121 volumes over eight years, peaking at the rate of one per weekend. Gasp.

But seriously

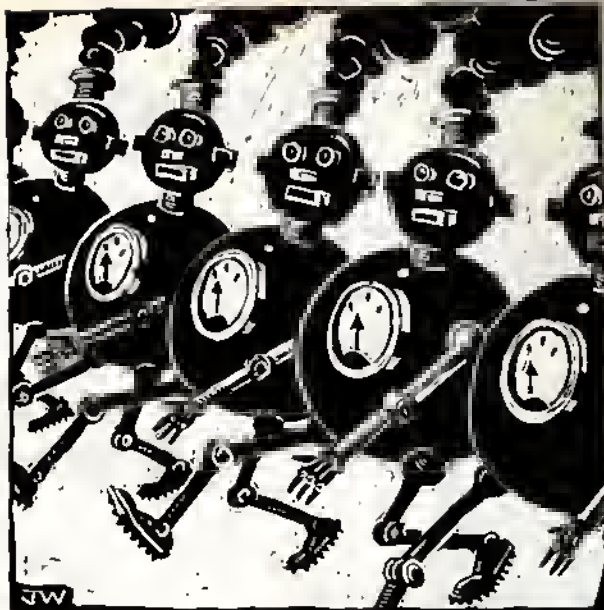
A less than funny point underlies all this. The typical paperback best-seller is a big fat book containing all too much padding. Please note the word "typical": I'm not trying to state a universal law here. There are always special cases. I'd hate to have to edit a single word from the fat but very densely textured *The Name of the Rose*.

Many such evils are committed in the name of research. It's easy to stuff a historical blockbuster with wedges of information torn raw and bleeding from history books. Nautical adventures bulge with stuff about splicing the mizzen-fo'c'sle's tween-yard quoins (or words to that effect), lifted boldly from textbooks or C.S. Forester. War/thriller epics revel in the clotted jargon of boys' toys:

*Lovingly he hefted his favourite automatic gun, an idiosyncratic VK 155 L/50 Swedish equalizer with 155mm calibre and a tann 865m/sec muzzle velocity. His mates scoffed at its bulk, but the chunky 14-round magazine and 25km range made it his kind of weapon, tough and mean.... There you are, all done from two minutes with Brassey's *Artillery of the World* — which gives enough information for several more pages, including the interesting fact that it's a self-propelled job weighing 51 metric tons. Oops.*

This leads to the much-feared Brand Names ploy. Ian Fleming made it famous in the Bond thrillers, which are too tightly written to be accused of padding. The idea is that judicious mention of the brand names surrounding your characters will economically anchor the scene in reality and tell you something about the people. SF writer William Gibson played a neat literary con-trick by extracting the same knowing effect from non-existent brand names, writing about the Ono-Sendai cyberspace deck in a way which made it clear this is the model the real in-crowd uses....

Now it's all escalated. You get long lists of names, descriptions of shopping for more brand names, descriptions of cars, cameras, wallpaper, bedding, clothes and much more. Amid these branded props, characters go through old routines from when writers were paid by the word: fiddling at length with cigarettes and cups of coffee, discussing the plot again and again in repetitive dialogue... fill in your own list. But cheating in books is easy. Just skim. Padding and repetition come into their own, almost as though designed for sloppy reading. What a horrid theory.



Padded Cells

Dave Langford

unravels the mysteries of extraneous editorial material - better known as padding

Can it account for Jeffrey Archer? Unless you have the stamina of a Fanthorpe, producing sheer waffle is actually very exhausting.

A far better SF author, Robert Sheckley, claimed this as his infallible cure for the terror of writer's block, when nothing will come. (Asked if he ever suffered this, the hugely prolific Robert Silverberg said: "Once. It was the worst ten minutes of my life.") Sheckley tried a drastic exercise to get things flowing again: making himself type 5000 words a day, any words so long as he met the required quota, grimly bashing out stuff like ...

Oh wards, where are you now that I need you? Come quickly to my fingertips and release me from this horror, horror, horror ... O God, I am losing my mind, mind, mind ... But wait, is it possible, yes, here it is, the end of the page coming up, O welcome kindly end of page ... After days of this, Sheckley made the great discovery that it was now easier to write a story than go on suffering.

So he did — saved by padding, though at such cost in mental anguish that he vowed never to use this ultimate literary secret again.

It's all yours.

User index

This month, we are proud to present the 8000 Plus Annual User Index, your complete guide to every feature, review, tipoff and listing to have appeared in the magazine over the last twelve months. Back issues can be ordered direct from our Somerton office (The Old Barn, Brunel Precinct, Somerton, Somerset, tel (0458)74011).

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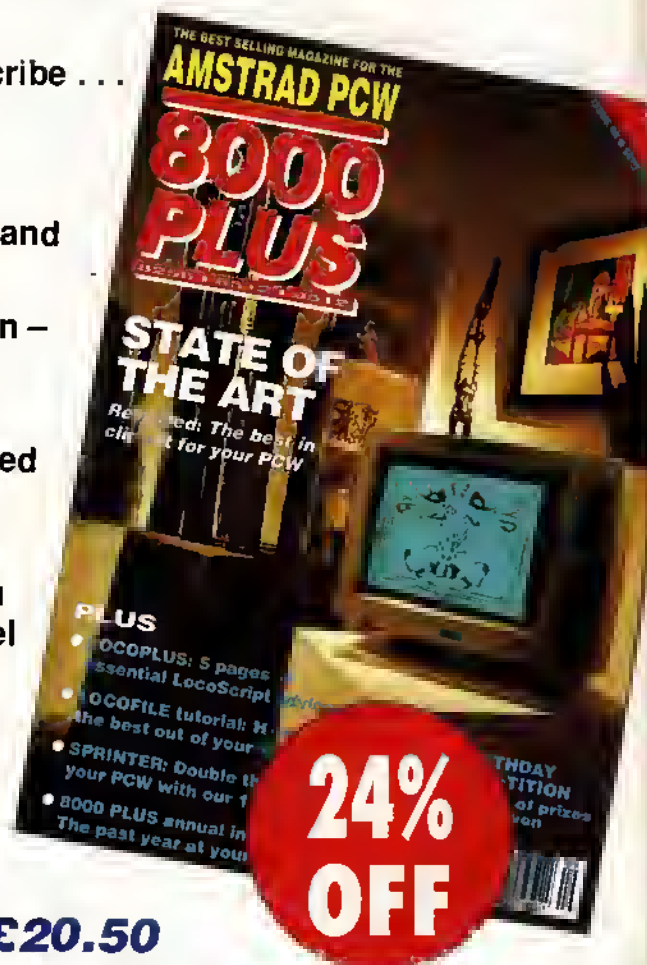
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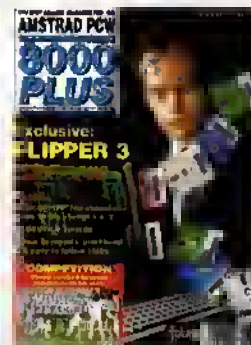
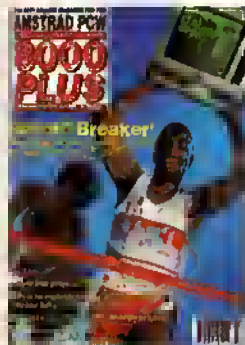
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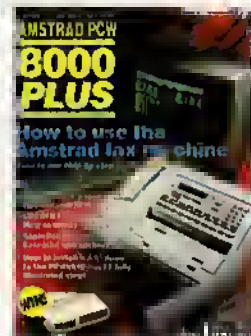
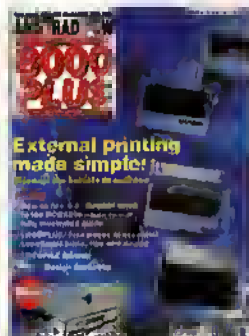
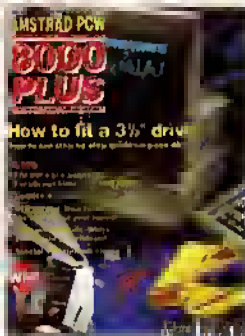
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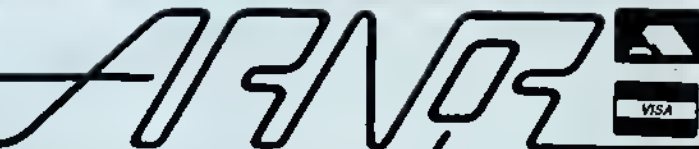
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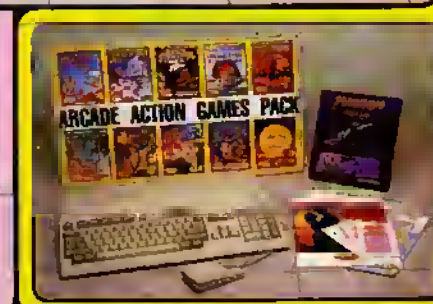
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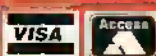
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Listings

Artificial intelligence? Well, not quite – but we do have a program that writes another program, and a computer that thinks quickly enough to keep you on your toes in an old favourite game

DESIGNER.BAS by Tom Pearce

Have you ever, as a BASIC programmer, fumed and fretted at the lack of a CP/M 'rick' character, or at the monotony of the supplied set of box borders? Or as a game writer, have you got fed up with using an arrow instead of a real alien in your own version of space invaders?

Fret no more. This program from Tom Pearce will allow you to redefine up to ten CP/M characters, and what is more, you can then save those characters to disc as part of a ten line program which you can use to redefine those characters whenever necessary – you can even use it as part of another BASIC program!

When you RUN "DESIGNER", you will be presented with a screen with a white 'patch' in the middle of it. This is your grid.

A PCW screen character is made up of a series of very small points of light, each known as a pixel. There are 64 pixels in each character, arranged in an 8x8 pattern. Each pixel is either on or off, and it is the arrangement of the 'on' pixels that you see on screen.

The grid that this program gives you (press any key to get into it) is also 8x8, although on a much larger scale. It allows you to build up your pattern of dots quickly and easily. Move around the grid with the arrow keys, and set a pixel using the space bar. If you make a mistake, by the way, the space bar will also turn a set pixel off.

When the pattern is ready, press E. You will be asked if the pattern is correct. Answer Y.

Now you will have to decide where to store your characters in memory. The program stores the new characters in sequential ASCII character positions in memory, overwriting the characters which were already there. So if you want to use certain characters from the CP/M set, make sure that you don't start somewhere where your required character is going to be overwritten!

If in doubt, check in the ASCII pages of your manual (page 113ff of the CP/M for the 8000 series, and page 547 for the 9512); also bear in mind that the program will only store in the range from 200 to 255. If your program runs beyond character 255, it will not work! Also,

make sure that you remember which character is stored where – you will need to know that when you come to use them in other programs!

Having decided where the characters are to go, you are now asked whether to save the program to disc. If you have more characters still to design, give the answer N, and define the next character. You will not be asked where it is to be put in memory – the computer will automatically overwrite the next character in memory.

Eventually you will want to save the

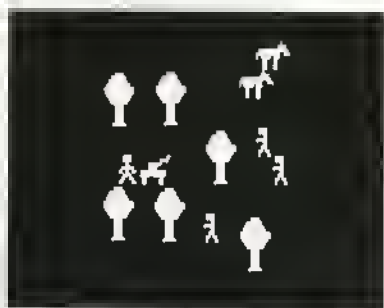
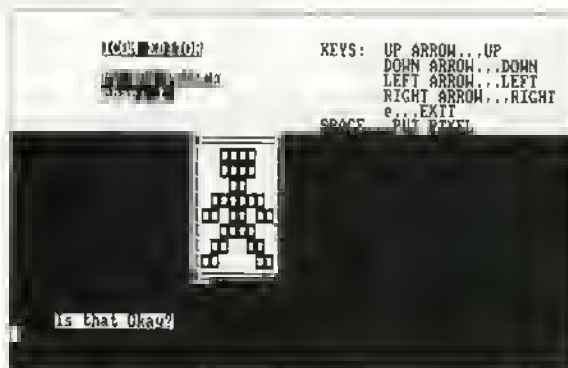
saved to disc by typing LOAD " followed by the name of your new program. When the 'Ok' prompt appears, type LIST and 8 lines of program (numbered 1 to 8) will appear on the screen. If you have defined more than 5 characters there is a small change to make to the new program at this point – type EDIT 7 [RETURN], and delete the last character of the line, which is a comma. Then SAVE the program back to disc, using the same name as before.

Now, to make sure that your new program is running, turn your machine off and reboot it. When you have BASIC installed, put the disc with your new character program on it into the drive, and type RUN " followed by the name of this new program. You should see your characters appear on the screen, one after the other.

Using them in a program is quite simple. You cannot access most of these characters directly from the keyboard. Instead, you will have to use the PRINT CHR\$() function, putting the ASCII code for your character inside the brackets. This is why you need to know the number of each character that you have redefined with 'Designer'.

You can include the program as part of another program by using BASIC's MERGE command – if your new graphics definition is called "GRAPHICS.BAS", just type MERGE "GRAPHICS.BAS" while editing the other program. LISTING will then reveal that the "GRAPHICS" program has become lines 1 to 8 of the new program. At this point you will need to do a little more editing. Change line 6 as follows: delete the final word 'END', and remove the command "PRINT CHR\$(char)".

Experiment will show that there is much that you can do with this program. Try defining 'sprites' of four characters which fit together to make a block. If you feel that for a particular program the ten new characters are not enough, try running the program again, with a different set of storage positions, and then merge both those programs into your main program (although don't forget to renumber the lines of the second program, and don't overwrite anything in the main program!).



The upper of these screen shots is the main screen of 'Designer' – where you create the characters, and the lower shot is part of a rather madcap game which uses the characters which have been created

program to disc. At this point answer Y to the question. You will then be asked to give a name for the program on disc. Any name will do, but it is a good idea to give it the extension '.BAS', so that the computer will know in future that it is a BASIC program.

Finally, you will be shown the characters that you have just defined, and will be asked if you want to continue. The answer is probably no.

Make sure that the program has been

How to type in a listing

Load up CP/M, and type 'BASIC' [RETURN]. You can immediately begin typing in the Listing, including everything except the numbers on the right hand side. These are for the special CHECK3 program (see the July issue). Only use the [RETURN] key at the end of each full line of text. When you have typed in the Listing, check it carefully – especially the punctuation – and then save it by typing SAVE followed by the name of the program in inverted commas. You can then reload it whenever necessary by typing LOAD followed by the same program name in inverted commas. To run the program, simply type RUN [RETURN].

If the program doesn't work, type LIST and check your typing thoroughly – the smallest mistake can make the program crash. If you do find a typing error, you can either rewrite the whole line, or else type EDIT followed by the line number and correct the mistake from there. When editing use the cursor keys to move around. Don't forget to save the corrected version before running it! If you do get an error message with a line number attached, it does not necessarily mean that the mistake lies in that line. For more details, see the "How to type a Listings" box in previous issues.

```

10 DEFINT a-z:count=1:x=1:y=1:t$=SPACE$(8):DIM ch(8,8),b$(8),b(8,10) 1B4A
20 RESTORE:x=1:y=1:GOSUB 150:GOSUB 270:FOR ab=0 TO 7:s$=b$(ab):GOSUB 282C
320:b$(ab)=r$:NEXT
30 FOR n=0 TO 7:PRINT FNsc$(45,n+15);b$(n):NEXT 163C
40 FOR a=0 TO 7:bin$=b$(a):1=LEN(bin$)-1:GOSUB 310:b(a,count-1)=dec:NEXT 21B0
50 DATA 243,62,129,211,241,62,130,211,242,175,95,103,22,184, 1649
58,153,192,111,41,41
70 DATA 41,25,17,154,192,235,1,8,0,237,176,62,133,211,241, 164E
62,134,211,242,251,201

```

These two data lines are the machine code necessary for redesigning the screen characters. They are also used in the program which is written to disc later.

```

80 IF count=1 THEN PRINT FNsc$(4,24);"Begining at which ASCII should characters be
stored "; 2E2B
90 IF count=1 THEN INPUT char:character=char ELSE char=char+1 20F9
100 POKE &HC099,(char):FOR r=0 TO 7:POKE &HC099+r+1,(b(r,count-1)):NEXT 1F71
110 PRINT "SAVE TO DISC?":k$=UPPER$(INPUT$(1)):IF k$="Y" THEN GOSUB 390 20F2
120 c1=&HC070:CALL c1:PRINT CHR$(char):PRINT:PRINT "Would you
like to continue?" 2AA6
130 k$=UPPER$(INPUT$(1)):IF k$<>"Y" AND k$<>"N" THEN GOTO 130 178F
140 IF k$="Y" THEN count=count+1:GOTO 20 ELSE PRINT nv$:END 1DF1
150 e$=CHR$(27):c1$=e$+"E"+e$+"H":PRINT c1$;:DEF
FNsc$(x,y)=e$+"Y"+CHR$(32+y)+CHR$(32+x) 2190

```

Line 150 is a typical 'housekeeping' line - defining the screen clearing and character positioning functions

```

160 l$=STRING$(8,138):t1$=CHR$(128)+l$+CHR$(128):b1$=CHR$(128)+l$+CHR$(128) 1C2C
170 iv$=e$+"p":nv$=e$+"q":PRINT e$+"0";iv$;FNsc$(20,8);t1$;FNsc$(20,17);b1$;nv$ 1F04
180 GOSUB 330:FOR n=9 TO 16:PRINT FNsc$(20,n);iv$;"|";t$;"|";nv$:NEXT 20A1
190 i$=INKEY$:IF i$="" THEN GOTO 190 ELSE i$=LOWER$(i$) 16CA
200 IF i$=CHR$(31) AND y>1 THEN y=y-1 ELSE IF i$=CHR$(30) AND y<8 THEN y=y+1 2082
210 IF i$=CHR$(1) AND x>1 THEN x=x-1 ELSE IF i$=CHR$(6) AND x<8 THEN x=x+1 1FC7
220 IF i$="" THEN GOSUB 240 ELSE IF i$="e" THEN RETURN 1724
230 PRINT FNsc$(x+20,y+8);:GOTO 190 0F7D
240 IF ch(x-1,y-1)<>1 THEN GOSUB 250 ELSE GOSUB 260:RETURN 1C18
250 PRINT FNsc$(x+20,y+8);nv$;CHR$(128);iv$:ch(x-1,y-1)=1:RETURN 1D31
260 PRINT FNsc$(x+20,y+8);iv$;" ";nv$:ch(x-1,y-1)=0:RETURN 1A99
270 FOR m=0 TO 7:FOR n=0 TO 7 0BFD
280 b$(m)=b$(m)+STR$(ch(n,m)):NEXT:NEXT 1032
290 PRINT FNsc$(5,20);"Is that Okay?":k$=UPPER$(INPUT$(1)):
IF k$<>"Y" AND k$<>"N" THEN GOTO 290 295E
300 IF k$="Y" THEN PRINT FNsc$(5,21);"Yes";FNsc$(5,22);
"Please Wait":RETURN ELSE RETURN 29D8
310 dec=0:FOR n=0 TO 7:dec=dec+(2^n)*VAL(MID$(bin$,8-n,1)):NEXT:RETURN 1FE7
320 r$="":FOR qw=2 TO LEN(s$) STEP 2:r$=r$+MID$(s$,qw,1):NEXT:RETURN 21D1

```

The previous lines deal with the display and input of the character as it is being created. The funny character in the middle of line 310 can be typed from the PCW keyboard using [EXTRA] U. It will appear as an 'up arrow'

```

330 PRINT FNsc$(0,0);:FOR n=1 TO 8:PRINT iv$;SPC(89);nv$:NEXT 1E56
340 PRINT FNsc$(10,5);"char:";count;FNsc$(10,2);nv$;"ICON EDITOR";iv$ 1FD9
350 PRINT FNsc$(10,4);nv$;"BY TOM PEARCE";iv$:FOR mn=0 TO 7:FOR nm=0 TO 3252
7:b$(mn)="" :ch(mn,nm)=0:NEXT:NEXT
360 PRINT FNsc$(34,2);"KEYS: UP ARROW...UP";FNsc$(34,7);
"SPACE...PUT PIXEL" 234B
370 PRINT FNsc$(34,3);SPC(7);"DOWN ARROW...DOWN";FNsc$(34,4);
SPC(7);"LEFT ARROW...LEFT" 27A1
380 PRINT FNsc$(34,5);SPC(7);"RIGHT ARROW...RIGHT";FNsc$(34,6);
SPC(7);"e...EXIT":RETURN 28A0

```

The 'information bar' at the top of the screen is drawn up in these lines. You can see how 'iv\$', defined in line 170 comes into its own in lines 330-350, and reverts the screen display. 'nv\$' puts it back to normal


```

390 GOSUB 420:PRINT c1$:INPUT "File name ";file$
400 OPEN "O",3,file$:PRINT "CREATING FILE: ";file$
410 FOR n=0 TO 8:PRINT #3,text$(n):NEXT:CLOSE
420 text$(0)="1 dim b(8,10):MEMORY &HBFFE:FOR x=&HC070 TO &HC098:
READ pk:POKE x,pk:NEXT x"
430 text$(1)="2 DATA 243,62,129,211,241,62,130,211,242,175,95,103,22,
184,58,153,192,111,41,41"
440 text$(2)="3 DATA 41,25,17,154,192,235,1,8,0,237,176,62,133,211,241,
62,134,211,242,251,201"
450 text$(3)="4 char=":text$(3)=text$(3)+RIGHT$(STR$(character),3)

1E72
460 text$(5)="5 count="+STR$(count)+":ch=char:while char<count+ch:POKE
&HC099,(char)"
470 text$(5)=text$(5)+":FOR r=1 TO 8:read b(r,ct):POKE &HC099+r,(b(r,ct))"
480 text$(6)="6 next:cl=&HC070:CALL cl:PRINT CHR$(char):char=char+1:wend:END"
490 text$(7)="7 data "
500 text$(8)="8 data "
510 FOR mno=0 TO count-1:FOR pqr=0 TO 7:GOSUB 530:NEXT:NEXT
520 text$(9)="9 REM FINISH":RETURN
530 IF mno>=5 THEN text$(8)=text$(8)+STR$(b(pqr,mno))+",":RETURN

```

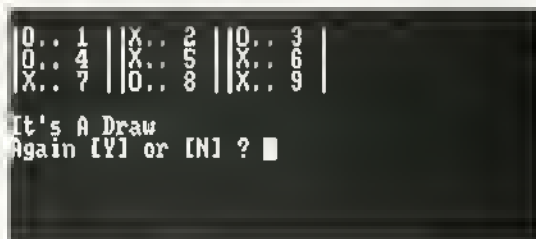
This is the clever bit – where the new program is written to disc. Line 400 creates the new file, 410 writes to it, and 420 to 500 provide the text for the program. Because it uses all the correct words, BASIC will be able to understand it

Starters Orders – OXO.BAS by Keith Boothroyd

Our second program this month is a game – the good old game of Noughts and Crosses. You play against the computer, which provides you with a pretty good defensive opponent. You'll find it difficult to put one over your PCW.

The rules are exactly as for normal noughts and crosses, except that instead of entering your moves by pencil, you refer to the square that you wish to go in by its number. You have the advantage of always going first.

But it's still a tough nut to crack. There is no randomisation sequence, so the computer tends to react in the same



way every time that a certain situation arises. Of course, if you've found a way of beating it, you could go on winning again and again with exactly the same set of moves – but that's not the point, is it?

It's far more fascinating to sit down

and try to work out a new way of beating the computer – forcing it into another situation from which it just can't win!

So type the listing in, settle into your armchair, and get ready to beat the computer at its own game!

Good ol' "Noughts and Crosses", just like Grannie and Grandad used to play it. The PCW is a mean strategic player, though, and will see all your possible winning lines. Are you alert enough to beat it?

Tom Thanks!

Our thanks to Tom Pearce for his 'Designer' listing. Tom has just spent a week on the 8000 Plus team as part of his school work experience – and a very handy and fun member of the team he proved as well! We wish Tom every success in the future.

```

10 e$=CHR$(27):g(1)=8:g(2)=2:g(3)=5:g(4)=1:g(5)=4
20 q$=CHR$(149):v$(0)=q$+CHR$(32):v$(1)=q$+"X":v$(4)=q$+"O"
30 DATA 1,9,4,3,7,2,3,9,3,2,8,3,1,7,3,1,3,1,4,6,1,7,9,1,-1,-1,-1
40 DIM b(9):PRINT e$;"E":GOSUB 50:GOTO 70
50 PRINT e$;"H":pr=4:FOR f=1 TO 9:IF f=pr THEN pr=pr+3:PRINT
60 PRINT v$(b(f)):"..":f;q$;:NEXT f:PRINT:PRINT e$;CHR$(74):RETURN
70 PRINT:INPUT "Number Please ";x:IF x<0 OR x>27 THEN 70
80 IF b(x)<>0 THEN 70 ELSE b(x)=1:GOSUB 50:gt=0
90 READ c,d,e:IF c=-1 THEN 110
100 pass=1:GOSUB 150:IF pass=2 THEN GOSUB 50:GOTO 70 ELSE 90
110 RESTORE:gt=gt+1:IF gt<6 THEN 90 ELSE PRINT "It's A Draw":GOTO 180
120 FOR pi=c TO d STEP e:IF b(pi)=0 THEN b(pi)=4:GOTO 140
130 IF b(pi)=0 THEN b(pi)=4:pass=2:RETURN ELSE NEXT pi
140 GOSUB 50:IF ct=8 THEN PRINT "I WIN":GOTO 180 ELSE pass=2:RETURN
150 ct=0:FOR pi=c TO d STEP e:ct=ct+b(pi):NEXT pi
160 IF ct=3 THEN PRINT "You Win ":GOTO 180
170 IF gt=0 THEN RETURN ELSE IF ct=g(gt) THEN 120 ELSE RETURN
180 INPUT "Again [Y] or [N] ";a$:IF a$="y" OR a$="Y" THEN RUN

```

This is slightly more complicated than our usual Starter's Orders listings – but then, it has to do quite a bit of thinking! Make quite sure that you type everything in accurately, with all the correct punctuation

The Fast Lane

Martin Le Poidevin shows you how to give your computer an internal speed upgrade. So don't hang around – get ready to get sprinting!

The heart of your computer is the Z80 chip. Along with its fellows on the Central Processing Unit (CPU) board, it does the thinking and calculating and sends out the commands that make the hardware function. What we are doing in this month's walkthrough is nothing short of replacing that Z80 chip, and bypassing much of the circuitry on the CPU board.

Back in March, we reviewed Cirtech's innovative 'Sprinter' chip, the PCW add-on that can improve your computer's speed performance by a theoretical factor of two. In practice, it tends to be held up a bit by the hardware, so that you, as the user, will notice most common applications taking about two-thirds of the time that they once took. In some jobs – like using MicroDesign's 'Tweak' utility – the time saving is truly substantial, amounting to hours. Even in everyday life, scrolling through a 15k LocoScript document in 19 rather than 30 seconds can make a big difference.

That's why you might well find yourself wanting to use Sprinter. But will you want to install it yourself? Sprinter is available in several different forms. Not all of them require opening your machine up – instead, you simply attach the Sprinter to the expansion port at the back of your PCW. It will automatically by-pass the existing chip, and begin operating in its place, at the new, improved speed.



But if you cannot do that, then you will have to put Sprinter inside. Even here, there are choices. For instance, you can send it off to Cirtech themselves, who will carry out the installation for a small charge – £25 plus VAT, which includes carriage. You can have extra memory added at the same time. Indeed, this is probably the best time to add that extra RAM if you're planning to at any point.

Home installation of the extra RAM is just a matter of plugging a few extra chips into the existing slots. No soldering for this job!

But what if you cannot afford to be without your PCW even for the short space of time that it would take Cirtech to install the new equipment? Then it's over to you. Once you have opened the back of your PCW, all you have to do is identify your main chip, and either remove it or add the new board over the

top of it (it is important that you identify which of these two processes you will have to carry out – see the box below, and the text below the pictures on the next pages to find out).

The most technical part of the job is a little soldering. This requires a steady hand, because the job to be done is rather an intricate one. If in doubt, leave it to the experts – unless you are confident of your soldering, and have done some electrical jobs in the past.

Once the final wire has been fitted securely into place, the job is finished. Just replace the back of your PCW, switch on and boot up. And hey presto! Those famous black lines fair race down the screen: Sprinter is working. If there are problems at this stage, the answer almost certainly lies in the installation that you have carried out. Unless the hardware has been damaged in some way, the fault will not lie with the Sprinter itself. Re-open the PCW and check connections. And, like every good surgeon, make sure that you haven't left your screwdriver inside the patient!

A whole world of PCW software and hardware is available for your 'Sprinter' computer. The only exceptions are Isenstein internal RAM expansion cards, the MasterScan scanner and all current model SCA Rampacs, although Cirtech can customise the last of these to include the extra memory into your upgraded machine.

TO SOCKET OR TO SOLDER?

One of the most important things to check at the start of the installation procedure is whether the Z80 chip that is presently installed in your machine is socketed or soldered to the CPU board. Examine steps 2 to 4 carefully to make sure what sort of chip attachment you have in your machine.

As a general rule, the 8000 series machines have a socket fixture, whilst the 9512 has its chip soldered to the board – but there are exceptions, and there seems to be no rhyme nor reason as to which computers are the exceptions. Always play safe and check!

In our 8256, anyway, the chip was a 'socket' one – it was attached to a socket, which was attached to the board. As you can see from the pictures on the next couple of pages, removing the old chip and inserting the new one was simply a matter of unplugging the old one, and

slotting in the new one. However, if your machine is of the type that has its Z80 soldered to the main board, then the installation becomes more complicated, although it is still covered in the excellent instruction booklet which comes with Sprinter.

For a start, there is more soldering to do. You obviously cannot just pull this chip off the CPU board; even if you did, you would have nowhere to plug your Sprinter into. Instead, you will have to attach a new socket over to top of the old chip. This means that each of the 40 pins of the new socket will have to be soldered to the corresponding 'leg' of the old chip.

Apart, that is, from leg 27, which is missing from the new socket, and which must be carefully cut off the old chip while it is still positioned on the board. One other, extra wire (besides the two

that are already attached to Sprinter), connecting the Sprinter board to the main circuit board will also have to be soldered into place.

Because this soldered installation is more tricky, and requires more patience, Cirtech say that they have been sent a far greater number of 9512 machines for upgrading than 8000 series machines. So if in doubt – you won't lose any face if you send your PCW to them!

There is one other sort of PCW that is going to give problems. That is the German type machine, some of which are in circulation in this country. The problem here is that the CPU board is hidden behind a metal plate, and is pretty inaccessible.

Again, the best thing to do if you have one of these machines is to send it to Cirtech themselves, and leave the installation to them.

Fact File

● The Sprinter which we used in this walkthrough was the basic model. It costs £89.70 (all Sprinter prices include VAT). But if you want to add extra memory to your computer at the same time – and most people do – you can get Sprinter with 256k RAM for £124.20, with 512k for £158.70, with 768k for £193.20 and with 1Mb of extra RAM for £227.70. External Sprinter packs are the same prices. Details from Cirtech (UK) Limited, Monksford Stables, Newtown St Binswells, Melrose TD6 0RU, Scotland. Their telephone number is 0835 23898.

● Cirtech are also the people to get in touch with if you wish to have your Sprinter installed by the experts. They charge £25 (+VAT) for this service, which includes carriage as well as the installation.

● The tools you will need for the installation are few: a long-handled Philips (crosshead) screwdriver, a small flat-bladed screwdriver, and a light-duty electric soldering iron, with a small (3mm or smaller) bit. Solder wire is provided. For computers with a 'soldered' chip (see the box on this page) you will also need a small pair of pliers and a small pair of wire clippers. A cloth to lay the computer down on is also essential.

Hints & Tips

● Step 1:

We took a little bit of a risk for our picture on the previous page, by taking Sprinter out of its protective bag before we needed it. It is far better to leave it in its anti-static environment until the last possible moment.

● Step 1b:

It is also worth checking that the soldering iron lead will actually reach the mains socket!

● Step 2:

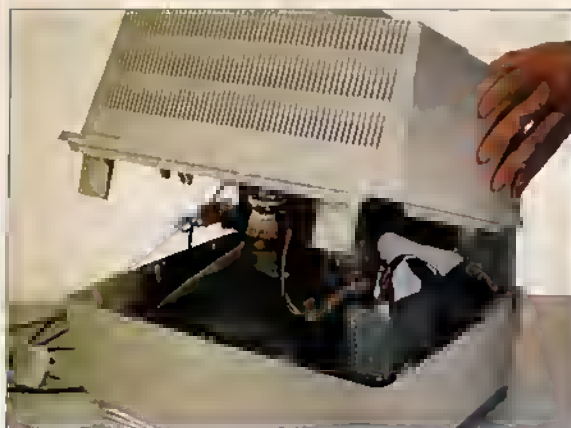
Another way of checking the location of the Z80: it is always located just close to the expansion port connector which protrudes from the back of the machine when the back is fitted - but not the port to which the printer is fitted.

● Step 3:

As with the Sprinter card itself, it is best to try not to touch the delicate parts of the CPU board. There is a handy bracket at the top of the board - try to use that to manoeuvre it. Every so often, touch the back of the drive case in order to remove any build up of static.

● Step 5:

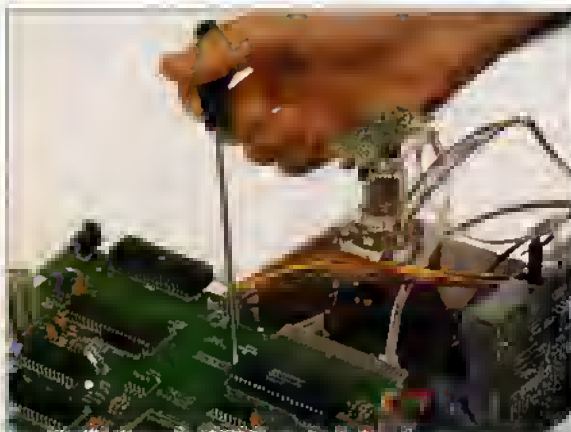
The best way of removing the old chip is to lever it out a little on one end, then go to the other end and lever that out a little, then go to the first end and lever a little more, and so on. When it becomes a little looser in the socket, use your fingers to gently rock the chip backwards and forwards until it comes free. Avoid damaging the socket - the chip is now less important.



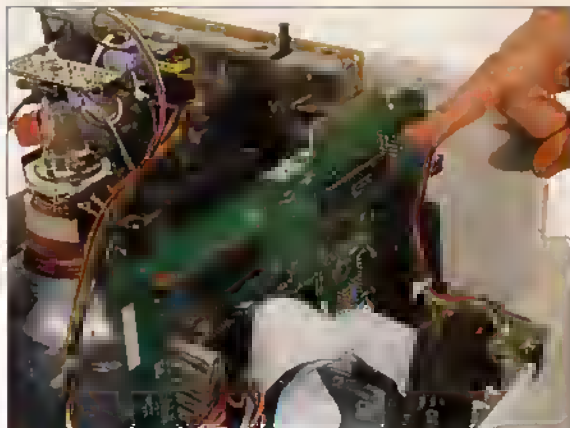
1 You will need to make sure that you have everything you need to hand. The full list is in the margin on page 57. You will need a fair amount of room to work in. Switch the machine off at the mains, but leave it plugged in for a minute or two to allow any static to drain away, and then unplug it completely. Remove the printer and keyboard, and lie the PCW face down on a soft cloth. Remove the six screws that hold the back in place (they are marked with arrows), and then lift the casing away.



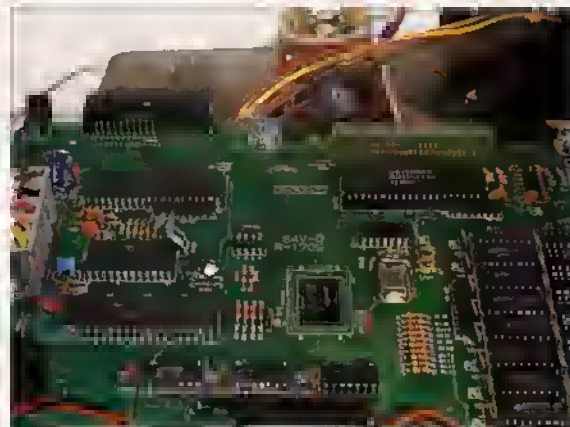
3 Having identified the chip, you will make your life a lot easier if you remove the CPU board itself from the rest of the computer (this is not so vital - nor so easy - on the 9512, where it is better to leave the board in place). To remove the board, find the clip that is at the top edge of the CPU card, towards the front of the computer. Press on this clip with your thumb, at the same time tugging gently from the top of the card with your other hand. Don't force anything.



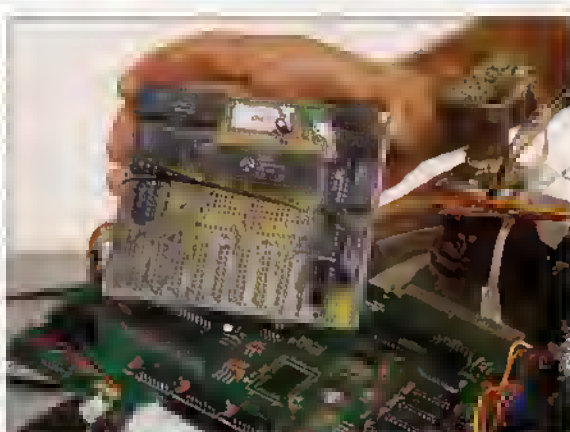
5 Now (assuming you have a socketed chip) you can gently remove the Z80 from its socket. Do this first by inserting the blade of a long-shafted screwdriver between the chip and the socket, and gently levering it up, first from one end, then from the other. Make absolutely sure that you are levering the chip from the socket, though, and not the socket from the board! When the chip is loose, use your fingers to gently pull it entirely away from the socket. You can now discard the chip.



2 You must now identify the CPU board, and the Z80 chip on that board. On the 8000 series (as illustrated in the picture) the CPU board is the one which sticks out from the computer between the disc drives and the monitor, and the Z80 is the fairly large chip towards the top of the board, towards the bottom of the machine. On the 9512, the CPU lies flat below the monitor tube. In either instance, the Z80 chip will have the legend Z80 printed on it, probably in amongst other information.



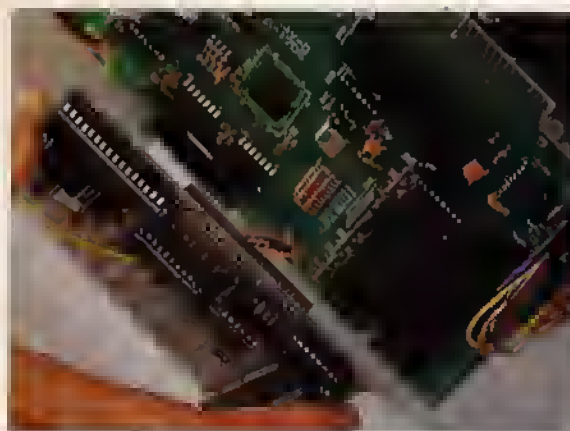
4 When the card does come free, you must be aware that there are still wires attached to it. Do not put any strain on these. However, get close enough to be able to identify the chip's attachment to the board. A soldered chip (see the box on page 57) will have its legs attached directly to the board (like the chips on the left in the picture); a socketed chip has its legs plugged into a piece of plastic, and it is this piece of plastic that is attached to the board, as in the Z80 on the right of the picture.



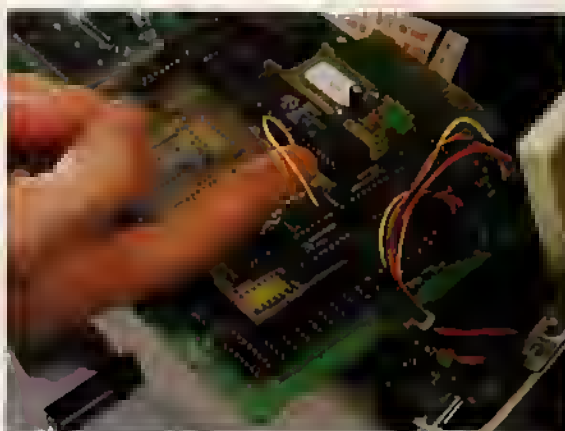
6 Now you can get your Sprinter out of the protective bag in which it came. This bag protects the new board from static. Before you attempt to remove the board from the bag, touch the back of the disc-drive casing in order to avoid static building up on your body. For the same reason, do not move around once you are holding Sprinter, and continue to touch the drive from time to time. When you are handling Sprinter, hold it by the edges, and avoid touching the circuitry.

Hints & Tips

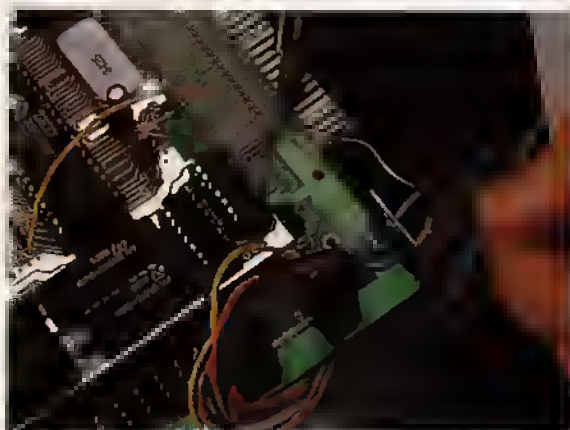
- **Step 7:**
A double-check on the correct orientation for the Sprinter board: the pins and a new chip that you will notice is also labelled Z80 should both end up at the end of the board nearest the expansion port connector.
- **Step 8:**
You must take this operation slowly. If any of the pins become bent or damaged, it may be impossible to rectify the problem without doing serious damage.
- **Step 10:**
Because the soldering is so tricky, you may well find it helpful to use the outside case of the computer to steady your hand. Do not touch any of the electrics, though.
- **Step 11:**
When you come to replace the CPU board, you could well find that there is a piece of clear plastic in the computer separating the drive compartment the main part of the computer. This is to make sure that the drive cannot come into contact with, and damage, the CPU. Since your Sprinter stands proud of the old card, make sure that it is completely protected by the plastic.
- **Step 12:**
Getting the screws back into their holes can be tricky - if you have a magnetic screwdriver it should be easy - if not, try a bit of Blu-Tack.



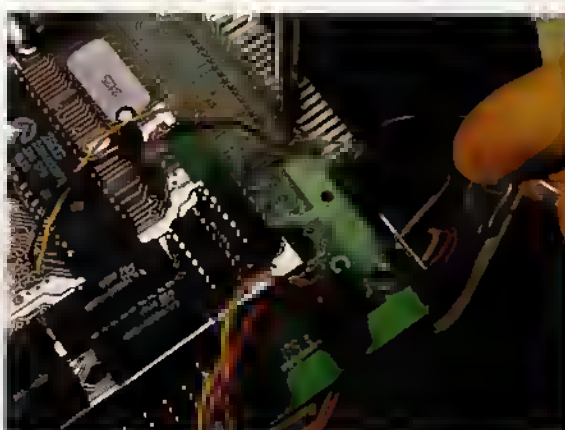
7 You will find a piece of foam attached to the back of Sprinter. This serves a double purpose - it holds the socket which you will need if your Z80 is soldered to the board, and it also protects the pins which will plug into the board. Carefully remove the foam, and discard the socket if you are not going to need it (that is, if your original Z80 was socketed). Carefully bring the Sprinter board over the CPU board, making sure that you have it the right way round, as shown in the pictures.



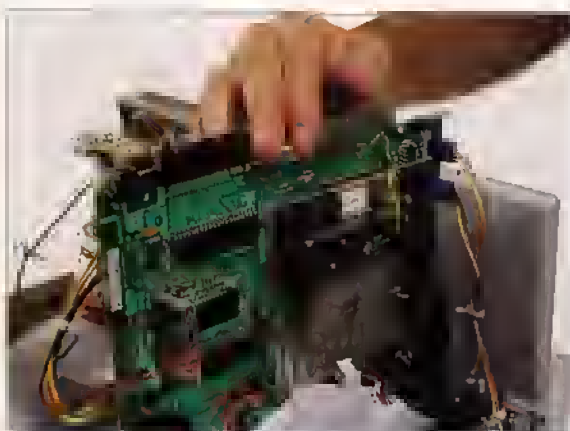
8 When you are happy with this, bring Sprinter in above the socket which used to hold the Z80, and which will now hold Sprinter. Position it so that the pins on the underside of Sprinter are directly over the holes of the socket, and then begin to push them gently into place. Be careful - the pins are quite delicate. If you feel any great resistance, stop and try again. Eventually you should be able to get the two units very close together. When you have done, find the two wires shown in the picture.



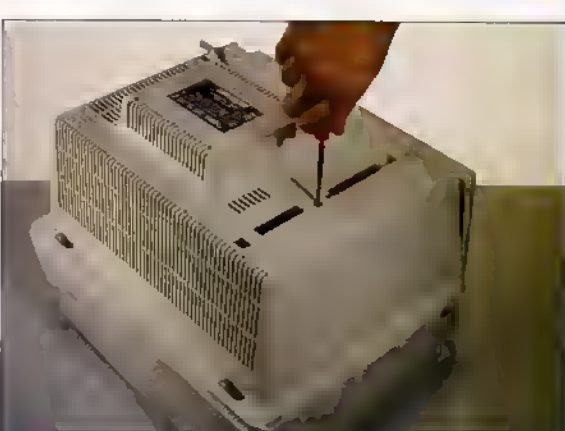
9 These two wires must now be soldered to the CPU board to complete the installation. On the CPU board, directly beneath the expansion port fixture, you will see two rows of very small holes. If you look at the board from the side to which Sprinter is now attached, with the port at the top, the holes that you need are the second and third from the right, on the bottom row. The first wire to attach is the yellow one, which goes into the second hole from the right, as above.



10 With the wire held in the hole in this way, it is much easier to do the soldering. Only a very small amount of flux is required for the job - just enough to secure the wire - because you must make absolutely sure that you only solder the wire into position, and do not allow any other connections to be made. Do be careful with the hot tip of the soldering iron, too. When the yellow wire has been fixed, go on to fix the black wire into the hole next to it - the third from the right.



11 If you have the soldered Z80 chip you will also have to add a third piece of wire, provided with Sprinter, from Sprinter to the main CPU board. But if, as in our case, your Z80 was socketed, then you will not need to worry about this final wire. If you removed your CPU board you should now put it back into place, holding the catch open with one hand as before, and pushing with the other. Make sure that both edges of the board go into their slots, and that the card goes all the way home.



12 Make one final check that everything is connected, and then replace the back of the computer, and do up the six screws which you originally took out - making sure that you put the right ones back in the right place! The best way of doing this is to put the back on, and make sure that it fits tightly, before putting the screws in. Turn the computer the correct way up, and before turning your machine on, re-attach the keyboard, printer and any other 'extras'. You can now switch on the PCW.

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


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The Good Software Guide

These pages provide a comprehensive guide to the Amstrad PCW software. Published in three monthly parts, this time it's the turn of Databases, Educational Software, Communications and Programming Languages. We've set out to cover every important piece of software we could lay our hands on, and to give you enough information to decide whether they are suitable for you. All software will run on both the 9512 and the 8000 series machines, though the former's daisywheel printer cannot print graphical output. The selection isn't exhaustive, but the software here represents what we think is the best of that currently available.

Databases

MASTERFILE 8000

£49.95 • Campbell Systems • 0378 777623

A specially written PCW version of the successful database sold on other Amstrad computers. It is fully menu-controlled, and makes good use of the PCW's special screen and keys. It can deal with up to 8 separate data files at once, so can cope with relational databases. Screen (but not printed output) can be elaborately laid out with boxes, lines etc.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Works fast
- ▲ Wide range of layout options
- ▲ Handles 'relational' files
- ▲ Plenty of good example files
- ▲ Does arithmetic calculations within records
- ▼ Capacity limited by size of M drive
- ▼ Takes a while to learn all the features

CAMBASE II

£60 + VAT • Cambrian Software • 0788 831878

New version of the old favourite PCW database. Most important change is the Copy Filespec facility. You can set up a new database with potentially more entries than you've made provision for using the information from the original database. You can also change the fields to suit another set-up.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Quick and efficient to use
- ▲ You can set up a database blueprint (Filespec) which you can test thoroughly before entering data
- ▲ Includes powerful features like conditionals, loops, field validation, and specified layouts
- ▲ Simple parts of the program are well covered in the manual
- ▼ You have to guess how to use the more advanced features
- ▼ Not much room for prompts
- ▼ Tendency to crash occasionally in Filespec

LOCOFILE

£34.95 • Locomotive • 0306 740606

The indexed pop-up database that runs from within LocoScript 2 and that goes even further toward turning LocoScript 2 into a completely integrated software package. Unlike most databases empty records take up almost no space on disc. This allows large record cards to be defined even if they won't always be used. Records pop up very quickly without having to exit from your document. Works best when used in conjunction with LocoMail.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ Unusually efficient use of disc space
- ▲ Can alter existing index – a very powerful feature indeed
- ▲ Automatically upgrades your LocoScript, LocoMail and LocoSpell to version 2.2
- ▲ Sample databases help you get a better feel for the program
- ▲ Carries out searches on partial strings

CHIBASE 3.0

£29.95 • Chiasma • 06333 60996

The updated version of the 'free format' database. You type in the text, mark the words to be indexed and treat the file as a database. The updated version allows you to import and export ASCII data files and a chain delete option enables you to work your way methodically through the database deleting the records you don't want while keeping those that you do.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Good aimed, start and recall features
- ▲ You can edit without a word processor
- ▲ Searches quickly through data
- ▲ Great for storing large amounts of data where the subject matter is variable
- ▲ Useful record template
- ▼ Can't run from M drive

DATASTORE II

£39.95 • Oligia International • 0395 270273

Ideal for the novice, Datastore II allows you to remove the tedium from filing, updating and organising information. 32000 records, 32 fields, last search facility. Function keys can have phrases assigned to them. Good for uses where the emphasis is on printed output.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Flexible range of print commands
- ▲ Simple to use
- ▲ Calculation facilities
- ▼ Need to preset maximum no. of records before you start
- ▼ Slow at browsing through

DELTA

£69.89 • Compsort • 0483 425925

Delta is another of the heavyweights, like dBase II and Coedni, but unlike them is fully menu driven. Although the screen layouts are fully flexible, there is a default "quick" layout so you don't have to sweat at defining your own. It could use better record indexing facilities. Particularly good for writing applications, once you have ploughed through the large manual.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Records can contain up to 90 fields, plus groups of fields that may be repeated
- ▲ Screen layout can be user defined, or "quick" mode used
- ▲ Single page letter writer provides detailed mail merge
- ▲ Processes can be defined, and run from user defined menus, for ease of use by others
- ▲ Very full, and quite readable, manual
- ▼ Only one field may be used for indexing
- ▼ Very big program – eats into memory!
- ▼ Some of the menu operations are unforgiving to errors

MINI OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

£39.99 • Database Software • 0625 858333

The Mini Office database retains its original format. It's a pretty standard card index type, similar to First Base. Good range of selection operations and arithmetic on fields. Can sort

over a combination of fields and print out a variety of smart layouts, and you can have up to 255 fields.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Easy to use and intuitive
- ▲ Can use the data in the word processor
- ▲ Powerful selection and sort facilities
- ▲ Arithmetic on fields
- ▲ Test print facility lets you check your labels will print okay
- ▲ One command makes global changes

POCKET INFOSTAR

£69.50 • MicroPro/DRA • 0388 841181

Consists of two large programs, DataStar and ReportStar (both available independently). DataStar is a conventional database, with screen card layout and indexing. ReportStar then generates the printed output, either from DataStar or CalcStar files. Powerful if you can use them, but the style is horribly overcomplicated, and the documentation just incomprehensible.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ DataStar is quite a good database with indexing and calculated fields.
- ▲ "Transuction processing" feature allows cross referencing of data files.
- ▲ Can be integrated with other Pocket products, eg WordStar.
- ▲ Can take up to 255 fields per record
- ▼ Two volume manual set is badly organised.
- ▼ There are separate programs to run for form design, data entry and reporting.
- ▼ Operation is all by obscure command keys, à la WordStar.

DBASE II

£56.35 (retail price) • Centresoft • 021 625 3398

The WordStar of database packages. Recently licensed "cheaply" for Amstrad machines, dBase II is a market leader in business computing. As you would expect, this means it is very powerful but very complex. It has a procedure language to allow you to write programs to manipulate the data, and you can construct index files for really fast access to large databases. If you can make the effort to learn it, it'll serve you well.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Powerful command language
- ▲ Indexing facility makes very large databases fast to handle
- ▲ Can handle very big databases
- ▲ The data can be easily altered after its entry
- ▼ Manual is daunting
- ▼ Can't easily alter the screen record layout
- ▼ For an expensive package, you still only get 32 fields per record
- ▼ Can be unfriendly unless you have some programming skills

FIRST BASE

£29.85 • Minerva • 0392 437758

Billed as a simple database for the first time user, First Base is quite a competent cheap card index. The manual is computer printed, and weak on diagrams which doesn't help things.

One weakness is getting printed results out of First Base – either you settle for crude lists, or you have to create a template in LocoScript which is awkward to do. But overall, it's pretty good value for money.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Can alter the index field at any time
- ▲ Simple to use screen editing makes data entry easy
- ▲ Good value
- ▲ Can easily browse through the database picking out a set by hand
- ▼ Manual is badly laid out and difficult
- ▼ Producing printed output is awkward

POPULAR RETRIEVE

£81 + VAT • SageSoft • 091 2131555

A high-power package that is relatively easy to use with password security if desired, calculations, automatic counting or deletion of sets of records satisfying given conditions. It also has sophisticated sort and select commands, and can change the structure of an existing database. All this is done by a set of commands rather like a programming language. Printed formats are rather limited though and the program insists on using both drives, making use on an 8256 impractical.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Easy to use for a powerful package
- ▲ Advanced sorting and selection commands
- ▲ Subsets can be written to files
- ▲ Counts/deletes subsets with one command
- ▲ Labelling/merging routines included
- ▲ Can change structure of existing database
- ▼ Impossibly big program for 8256
- ▼ Printed output limited – must use mailmerge

SCRIPT2BASE TEXT2BASE

£29.95 each • Encyclosoft • 0270 811890

Two free-form databases to be used with LocoScript and Protext respectively. Complete rewrites of FT=88, the beauty of these databases is that you first create all your text on the word processor and import it as an ordinary (non-ASCII) text file into the database. You then mark all the words you want to see indexed as keywords so that you can go on to compile indexes and carry out searches.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ Allows you to organise your collection of discs like an encyclopaedia
- ▲ Can construct new files made up of selected parts of existing ones
- ▲ Can send any part of a document to the printer on a line-by-line basis
- ▼ No text-editing facilities within the databases themselves
- ▼ Dreadful documentation

SMARTCARD

£80 + VAT • Pecan Software • 0272 425012

A conventional card index database which is now the nearest thing available to Cardbox. Small and fast, you can sort the records, index up to three fields and do simple arithmetic on

fields. Can't put background text (eg. titles) on records or printouts.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Good clear screens
- ▲ Plenty of on screen help
- ▲ Fast and high capacity
- ▲ Easy to use
- ▼ Can't put background text on printed reports
- ▼ No way of exporting data for mailmerge

MICROFILE Sold in The Micro Collection
£49.95 • Saxon Computing • 0964 550697

Microfile is a well implemented simple database, driven by plenty of menus and on-screen prompts. It's fast and has good screen control, although it has some size restrictions. Microfile comes as part of a software suite, "The Micro Collection", which is good value (Microfile, Microwrite, MicroSpread, Flexilabel and Lock-It).

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ The price includes competent word processing, spread sheet, labelling and encryption programs
- ▲ Plenty of menus and on screen prompting
- ▲ Very flexible formatting for screen layout and printing
- ▲ Numeric fields can be expressions to be calculated
- ▲ Indexing is fast and can be on several fields
- ▼ Maximum of 20 fields per record
- ▼ Limited facilities for totalling up fields

Educational

BUSINESS FRENCH

£49.95 each • Apex Computing
Services • 0273 727477

Four language learning packages which enable the Euro-conscious professional to get to grips with commercial jargon in another tongue. Areas covered are business, technical, travel, restaurants, communications and social - all with separate sub-sections to ensure that every eventuality is covered. A basic knowledge of the language concerned is, however, essential.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Fun and easy to use
- ▲ Comprehensive range of vocabulary
- ▼ Program needs cassettes to be really good
- ▼ Some poor screen displays

IANKEY CRASH COURSE

£24.95 • Ianysyst • 071 607 0167

A fairly traditional typing tutor, taking you through basic keyboard exercises. There's a lot of explanatory text, which gets in the way second time around. Definitely competent, but a bit boring.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Mostly avoids boring letter drills
- ▲ Very full on-screen information
- ▲ "Fast" option is able to cut out some text if it gets repetitive
- ▼ Unimaginative use of graphics
- ▼ It doesn't always ensure that the cursor is properly aligned with the exercise text

2 FINGERS TOUCH TYPING

£24.95 • Ianysyst • 071 607 0167

Despite its name, a useful typing tutor in that it specifically caters for people who can already get by on keyboards with two fingers. You are gradually introduced to touch typing, so your speed doesn't drop while you learn. Fills a necessary slot in the Typing Tutor market.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Suitable for improving two finger typists without much drop in speed
- ▲ Full on screen instructions
- ▲ Exercise material is interesting text, not letter drills

▼ Explanation text is annoyingly verbose in some lessons

▼ It doesn't always ensure that the cursor is properly aligned with the exercise text

GIANTKILLER

£17.35 + VAT • Topologika • 0733 244662

A mathematics adventure game loosely based on Jack and the Beanstalk. Lots of intriguing puzzles which should stimulate any student up to GCSE standard. Not the best adventure game ever written but great for making mathematics fun.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Puzzles plausibly integrated into scenario
- ▲ Progression of game is well defined
- ▲ Puzzles introduce a lot of valid mathematical challenges
- ▼ Understands only very simple commands
- ▼ Saving a position takes a while
- ▼ Won't be of particular help in exams

ANIMAL/VEGETABLE MINERALWORLD WISE

£14.95 • Bourne Educational • 0794 523301

Aimed at the younger market, 7-15 year olds. Both these programs work by learning as the child uses them. Think of an object and the computer tries to guess it. If it is wrong, the child is asked for a question which would allow the PCW to be right next time, and it learns.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Can be used as many times as the child's imagination holds out
- ▲ Performance can be analysed by a teacher after a session
- ▲ As you build up a base of objects and questions, they can be saved for reuse
- ▼ It needs a lot of typing, hence a lot of supervision
- ▼ The PCW starts with only two objects known, so it takes time to get going
- ▼ Documentation has hardly been altered from cassette based versions
- ▼ Since it is for young children, more imaginative use of the screen would be nice

BETTER SPELLING

£16.95 • School Software Ltd • 010 353 61 45399

This is a spelling course aimed at the 8 to adult age group. It consists of a series of well organised, short lessons each dealing with one topic, like plurals or which version of there/their/they're to use in a sentence. The use of the PCW screen is rather unimaginative, and doesn't hold your attention.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Well thought out lessons to emphasise particular points
- ▲ Teaches words in a sentence context as well as in isolation
- ▲ Lessons can be selected in any order you wish from a menu
- ▲ Is proof against mischievous key pressing
- ▼ Boring use of the screen
- ▼ No operating instructions

CHEMISTRY BIOLOGY/PHYSICS

£22.95 each • School Software • 010 353 61 45399

These two are fairly traditional question-and-answer tests. You are faced with a choice of 10 topics, and then asked 10 or so questions each, where you have to fill in the blank in a statement. There are preamble notes beforehand, and if you get it wrong you are given a clue. Aimed at 12-16 year olds.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Would challenge a GCSE pupil well
- ▲ Preamble notes introduce topics
- ▼ The fill in the blank questioning style has little flexibility for different answers
- ▼ No option to add questions for a specialised syllabus

▼ Some careless errors, like incorrect feet and hard to decipher chemical formulae

MICRO MATHS

£24.99 • LCL • 0491 579345

Supposedly covering 8 to adult ages, this seems an O-level type program, covering topics from calculus to inbles. A good implementation on the PCW with proper use of the screen. Questions are picked at random from a pool, so may repeat but never run out. Replies to questions are typed in mathematical notation, like X÷2+3

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ You can pecc to use BASIC as a calculator while you think
- ▲ "Unlimited" question set
- ▲ Comes with a "free" book of AEB O level questions
- ▲ Good hints and explanations
- ▼ Questions in a topic repeat occasionally
- ▼ Some frills, like the clock and beeper, are annoying
- ▼ No flexibility to add questions for a particular syllabus

AMSTAT 1,2,3,4,6 AND 7

£28 • £40 • SC Coleman Ltd • 0530 415919

A suite of six statistical routines including a business analysis program, forecasting and resource management. Individual prices range from £27.95 to £39.95. Very sophisticated, but perhaps a little awkward for beginners.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Good range of statistical functions
- ▲ Good manual
- ▲ Can produce good quality graphical results
- ▼ Some editing procedures very long winded
- ▼ Needs some expertise to use properly
- ▼ Weak on checking that input data is valid

ULTIMATE QUIZ

£9.95 • David Greenhough Computing • 0274 636475

Ten quizzes on topics as diverse as the Highway Code and the Italian language. Clean screens and an easy to use program make Ultimate Quiz an excellent entertainment and good value for money, too.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Optional nights and crosses game included with either quiz
- ▲ Incorporates an editing file for easy updating of questions
- ▲ It's very versatile - up to 8 people can play
- ▲ None of the questions are repeated
- ▼ Some of the questions are a little esoteric

ULTIMATE SUMS

£9.95 • David Greenhough Computing • 0274 636475

Another fine piece of educational software from DGC. The computer quite simply throws up a series of sums which you (or your child) are required to answer. There are lots of little extras: graphics, jokes, a timer, competitions for up to 8 players and various levels of difficulty, right up to cube roots.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Will appeal to all age groups at all levels
- ▲ Includes facility to print out scoresheets
- ▲ Great way to learn an unpopular subject
- ▲ Lots of different options
- ▼ Challenges are a little slow to load

CROSSGRID

£9.95 • David Greenhough Computing • 0274 636475

"Crossword puzzles without clues" is how the packaging describes this program. Instead, a grid of numbers is presented to the player, each number representing a letter. The skill is to analyse the possible combinations and produce words. Various levels of difficulty mean that it is suitable for all ages - although some of the words, even in the lower levels, can be rather

advanced. Ideal for the adult crossword fan

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Easy to install
- ▲ Variety of challenge levels
- ▲ Ideal for lateral thinkers
- ▲ Totally addictive
- ▼ No competitive element
- ▼ Some very obscure words

SUPERMATHS

£16.95 • Abacus Software • 0689 83629

Specifically designed for the PCW, this program exercises basic numeracy skills in children. Questions are asked in quick fire volleys of ten and cover all four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division). Scores are automatically recorded.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Special original Test and Worksheet modes included the latter is ideal for teachers
- ▲ Very efficient scoring method
- ▲ Numeracy level is very basic
- ▲ New version has enhanced screen displays
- ▼ Some of the questions may start to look familiar after a while

MARKSHEET

£16.95 • Abacus Software • 0689 83629

Aimed at the teacher rather than at the class, this vertical software utility will add up your end of term marks for each pupil; it will then keep the information on disc and print it out neatly in A4 paper. It can be made to fit your own specifications.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Easy to use - takes five minutes to learn
- ▲ Mark sheets can be inserted into LocoScript
- ▲ Good on screen help
- ▲ Averages worked out for you
- ▼ Underpowered and slow
- ▼ Expensive for what it is

LANGUAGE TUTORS

£19.95 each • Kosmos Software • 05255 3942/5406

Four programs with identical formats to help you learn French, Italian, Spanish and German. They can be used just as effectively by students of those languages learning English too. Very versatile series of programs and useful adjuncts to conventional language learning.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Can edit the lessons yourself to include new words
- ▲ Useful self test option
- ▲ Completely bi-lingual packages
- ▼ Voice learning only - no grammar lessons
- ▼ Would have been more useful if they had also included audio cassettes

MATHS MANIA

£16.95 • School Software Ltd • 010 353 61 45399

For children between the ages of 8 and 12, this program offers 5 levels of difficulty in multiplication and 2 in division. A very good program for exercising basic numeracy skills and for practising some mental arithmetic.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Program provides a chirpy feedback on the score of the user
- ▲ Large numbers appear on the screen
- ▼ Surprisingly enough, no addition or subtraction exercises are provided
- ▼ Screens could be made more visually exciting for the younger users

BETTER MATHS

£16.95 • School Software Ltd • 010 353 61 45399

A continuation of Maths Mania for the next age group 12 to 16 year olds. Topics are very varied and cover, among others, statistics, simple interest and algebra. Each topic consists of a series of ten multiple choice questions. All

the end of each set, the percentage scored is shown.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Realistic level of difficulty practised
- ▲ Program makes a first class revision aid

FUN SCHDDL 3

£24.99 • Database Software • 0625 859333

A disc for the under-5s. Fun School 3 comprises six games which aim to improve the basics of early education - counting, matching and recognising letters, and so on. The main character is a teddy bear, and his rewards for your good work means that he gains a new hoose, cats ice cream and fills the coffers of his piggy bank.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Program has excellent and delightful graphics
- ▲ The basic ideas are original
- ▲ It is of genuine educational value
- ▼ The disc is rather slow to load

JUNIOR PLAYTIME

£9.95 • David Greenhough Computing • 0274 636475

A set of 100 educational games for the four to eight-year-old range. Not school work brought home and made fun, though - this is more a test of general ability than general knowledge. Games include matching pairs of words, guessing numbers and a Maze puzzle.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Plenty of games to choose from
- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ Can "edit" certain parts of the package
- ▲ Includes a score sheet option
- ▲ The graphics are excellent
- ▼ Some games more fun than educational
- ▼ No documentation

SCHOOL'S OUT

£9.95 • David Greenhough Computing • 0274 636475

Not so much "out" as nowhere to be seen. The sequel to Junior Playtime, aimed at seven to fourteen, the five games on this disc are definitely more games than "tests". But they do include some of the intellectual "greats", such as Reversi, Othello, Heegman and Four in a Row (Connect 4), which will stimulate thought and reasoning rather than simple reaction.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Good selection of games
- ▲ Four or five difficulty levels for each game
- ▲ Good use of graphics
- ▲ Challenging and fun
- ▼ Documentation is on the disc rather than hard copy and is not very clear anyway

YES CHANCELLOR!

£17.35 + VAT • Topologica • 0733 244682

Wait! Don't skip over Yes Chancellor! because it calls itself an "economic simulation" program. Instructive and fun to use, you type in your annual budgets (tax rates, public spending, etc.) and see your popularity plummet and the economy crash. Great for economics classes, also an amusing game in itself.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Simple but effective model of the economy
- ▲ Has booklet explaining economic principles
- ▲ Teaches economic and political pragmatism
- ▼ Can get boring as a game
- ▼ You can't adjust the model of the economy, so it can be too simple

Communications

8256UKM7.CDM

Public domain (i.e. free!)

P.D. software documentation is often poor but this program has an above average document file. UKM7 was written to support ASCII file

transfers using error correction and as a dumb terminal either for use over the phone or between two Amstrads. Between two PCW's file transfer is possible at a staggering 31,250 baud which is even faster than PIP! Easy to use for beginners and better than KERMIT, UKM7 provides a cheap and excellent way to communications after you've got fed up with the PCW's MAIL232. 8256UKM7 is available from the Public Domain Special Interest Group, or most bulletin boards supporting the PCW machines.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Cheap! (the price of a phone call)
- ▲ Easy to use, and helpful menus
- ▼ Modem7 version of Xmodem error checking supported
- ▼ Single file and Batch Mode transfers
- ▼ "Quiet" mode for slightly faster transfers (on-line transfer progress report disabled)
- ▼ Only ASCII, no Viewdata
- ▼ You need to find a PD software source (eg. use a modem and MAIL232 software)

MINI OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

£39.99 • Database Software • 0625 859333

The comms package is as comprehensive as anything else on the market. It can display both ordinary text screens and the 'Viewdata' block graphics used by Prestel. You are offered baud rates from 75 to 9600, separately set for transmit and receive, straight terminal emulation for use with Telecom Gold, and XMODEM and KERMIT file transfer protocols for error-proof transfer of long files. Would be well worth the money just by itself - and of course you're getting four other very good programs as well.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Very comprehensive - a genuinely useful comms package
- ▲ Ordinary text and 'Viewdata' block graphics
- ▲ Can save suspects eeder names and recall them, so you only need work out your baud rates/pauses once
- ▲ You can set keys to return strings, such as Telecom Gold passwords
- ▲ Comes preconfigured to use Prestel and Telecom Gold

CHITCHAT E-MAIL VIEWDATA/COMBO

SageSoft • £69.99/£69.99/£99.99 • 091 264 7077

Two communications programs for the 8000 series machines that have been around for a good time now. Most of the features you will need are here: message text editor, preprogramming unattended tasks (if you use a suitable "intelligent" modem), directory of stored numbers, copy to printer, and a very useful connect time clock so you can watch your phone bill climb! E-mail is used for simple text phone links like Telecom Gold, whereas you'll need Viewdata if you want to use Prestel. The Combo pack contains E-mail and Viewdata.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Good, clear documentation
- ▲ Easy for first timers to use
- ▲ Built in text editor for message preparation
- ▲ Pre-definable tasks executable at any preset time if unattended.
- ▼ No error corrected file transfer (i.e. Xmodem or CRC)

DIALUP

£72.40 • PM5 Communications • 021-843 7688

Offers both E-mail and Viewdata operations. Very easy to use, and offers an XMODEM transfer protocol unlike Sage ChitChat. If you are buying a modem too there are some cut-price bundled deals to be had, eg. the Miracle Technology WS4000 modem.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Simple to use
- ▲ Comprehensive file transfer commands, including XMODEM and the increasingly

popular KERMIT

- ▲ Rens from the M drive
- ▼ Manual is not PCW specific, and thus references to 5.25" discs are tedious

Programming

BASIC NEEDS

£8.15 • LuxSoft • 0726 850920

A BASIC handy for programming buffs, which requires a small amount of foreknowledge to operate. Consists of five files that can be run under Mallard BASIC, including FRED, the FricedlyText Editor, which is an extremely agile and versatile file editor and program editor. Basic Needs is excellent value for money. A voluntary contribution can be made to the RNLI when you buy this - more details from LuxSoft, on the number above

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Uses of LocoScript keys
- ▲ Easy to use
- ▲ Loads of features

HISDFT C

£49.95 • HiSoft • 0525 718181

A very good C compiler, fast, produces good compact code. It comes complete with the HiSoft integrated text editor ED80.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Compiles program into ordinary CPM .COM file
- ▲ Produces compact code
- ▲ Fast and inexpensive
- ▲ Comes with integrated text editor
- ▼ No floating point arithmetic

ARNOR C

£49.95 • Amor • 0733 68909

Good compiler with floating point arithmetic, but not as fast or as cheap as HiSoft C.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Excellent integrated text editor
- ▲ Floating point arithmetic
- ▼ Cumbersome to produce .COM files, needs special run time support program
- ▼ HiSoft C is faster and cheaper

MIX C

£33.95 • Advantage • 0242 224340

American C compiler. A fuller package, including text editor, graphics and tutorial comes at £49.95. There is also machine code assembler and examples, available separately for £8.95 each.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ This package features an excellent C tutorial
- ▲ Comprehensive implementation and massive manual
- ▼ Definitely not for the newcomer to programming

PASCAL 80

£49.95 • Nisoft • 0525 718181

A standard full Pascal compiler that produces compact code, comes with the ED80 text editor and a stand alone programmers editor.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Well integrated text editor - when you hit a compilation error you are returned to the correct point to edit it
- ▲ Short compilation time
- ▼ The manual doesn't set out to teach you about Pascal

HISDFT FORTH

£19.95 • Nisoft • 0525 718181

Forth is an unusual language, somewhere between assembler and C. This is one of the few compilers available for the PCW.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Comes with a Forth editor
- ▲ Quick and efficient implementation

▼ Manual doesn't teach you Forth

THE VICAR

£29.95 • Iansyst • 071-607 5844

A programming tool for serious programmers. If you have a several-hundred line program held in several files on a disc, you can lose track of which variables are used where. The VICAR produces a concordance listing and other diagnostics, to help you find bugs and maintain the program.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Easy to use but still flexible through proper use of options
- ▲ Amstrad versions all at a special low price
- ▲ Good manual
- ▼ Only of value on large programs
- ▼ Limited value to most PCW users (except BASIC buffs)

ALL YOU EVER ...

£29.85 • CP Software • 0993 823463

Program is ridiculously entitled All You Ever Wanted To Know About Graphics, the Universe and Everything on the PCW 8256/8512 but were Afraid to Ask. It's for the experienced programmer who needs fast, smoothly flowing and professional looking graphics output. It has a library of machine code routines which you can use in any language from Mallard Basic to machine code.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ You can produce professional graphics
- ▲ Demo programs included on the disc
- ▲ Routines are very wide ranging
- ▲ Excellent value for money
- ▲ New routines of latest version concerned with printer control
- ▼ Not recommended for beginners
- ▼ Cumbersome to use from Basic

DEVPAC 80 MKII

£49.95 • Nisoft • 0525 • 718181

Version 2 of the PCW hacker's first choice of development system. Substantially upgraded from the original with a new quite powerful debugger, and a Mini Offsets-style main menu from which to run the individual utilities or your own finished programs.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Powerful assembler producing REL or COM files
- ▲ Good hex facility for Basic programmers
- ▼ Text editor antiquated and clumsy
- ▼ Weak monitor

MAXAM II

£49.95 • Amor • 0733 68909

CP/M machine code development system incorporating an editor, assembler and monitor. Allows you to disassemble any of the memory banks including extra memory on M drive.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Very versatile assembly language programming environment
- ▲ Flexible monitor capable of bank switching, conditional breakpoints and symbolic debugging
- ▲ Tailored to meet all CP/M Plus programming requirements
- ▲ Program can't cope with some undocumented Z80 instructions
- ▲ Program assumes basic familiarity with the Z80 assembly language

MODULA 2

£54.95 • Nisoft • 0525 718181

A compiler. Modula-2 is the successor to Pascal, good for large programs requiring separate compilation. Complete with text editor.

PLUSES and MINUSES

- ▲ Full implementation with extensions.
- ▲ Includes libraries of predefined modules
- ▲ WordStar type screen editor included
- ▼ Compilation process is long winded



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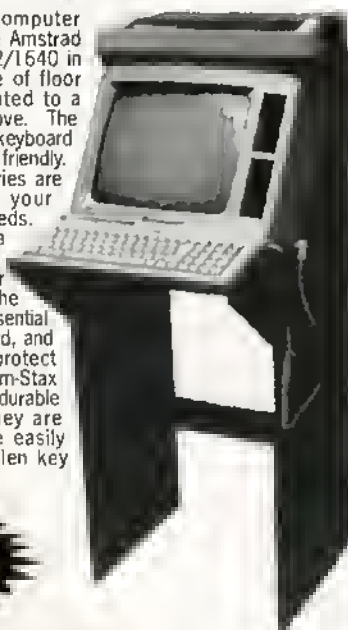
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Tipoffs

Tipoffs

Get on the ball with Tipoffs!

Can't tackle LocoScript? Think that manual keeps moving the goalposts? Is your PCW putting you in a foul mood? Don't just give up and go and watch the start of the football season instead, get in league with Tipoffs, the pages whose goal is to solve all your problems, from saving headers to scoring with drives.

In these pages you'll find invaluable coaching on LocoScript, MicroDesign, BASIC, Masterfile, Flipper, Mini Office and all the most popular PCW programs.

Terry Pitt of Walsall has £30 shooting towards him for his way of spell-checking just one division of a LocoScript document. If you have a question or the answer to a problem in LocoScript or any other program, let us know - you could win hard cash.

It comes in off the post to us at Tipoffs, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW - which is Freeport, so you'll kick yourself if you don't!

Paper ins and outs

Users of MicroDesign with an external printer can find that the paper-out detector is activated before the whole length of the paper has been used. This can either be overcome by disabling the detector from the dip switches (which can lead to problems with the automatic paper loading for subsequent sheets), or by sending codes through the program. The latter method is as follows. Prepare a page for printing and load paper into the printer, ensuring that the paper-out detector is not disabled via the dip switches. Go into editor mode and type
`*codes 27 56 {RETURN}`
`*current {RETURN}`
`*codes 27 57 {RETURN}`
 Go back to Layout and print using the Print Queue option. The first instruction in the queue disables the detector, the next prints the page, and the third re-enables the detector when the page has been printed so a new sheet can be loaded easily. This works on the Star LC24 and on most printers with Epson or IBM emulation.
 M Komor, Cowbridge, S Glamorgan

Nailing those files

To display the contents of a file, called FILE.1 say, on screen in BASIC is easy: just `DISPLAY "FILE.1"` (or whatever the name of the file. But how can you print the contents of FILE.1 to the printer? Damian Kramer, Bungay, Suffolk
 8000 Plus; Try the following routine:

```
10 INPUT "File to
print";file$
20 OPEN "I",1,file$
30 WHILE NOT EOF(1)
40 a$=INPUT$(1,1)
50 LPRINT a$;
60 WEND
```

When this is run, you merely type file.1 or whatever the name is and the contents are printed on the printer.

Shadow scheme

Here's a way to add variety to your pages in Micro Design 2, using type with an outline and a drop shadow. Amaze your friends! Here's how.

1. Set the type in Micro Design 2. Don't position the letters too closely to allow space for a shadow. Using TWEAK, create an outline version. You can also use the outline option in the [WRITE], but it doesn't work as well and is difficult to position properly.
2. Using [BLOCK], make a copy of the regular version under one of the [STORE] keys. Or copy the image to another part of the Design Window if it is too big to store.
3. Using [BLOCK] again, select [F5] and [INVERT] the area around one of the regular versions.
4. Using [BLOCK] again, [COPY] the non-inverted image over the inverted one in transparent mode, setting it off slightly to the top and to the right. The further you set it off, the bigger the shadow will be.

If you were able to save the image under [STORE], position it in transparent mode in the same way. You should end up with something like the illustrated image.

5. Using [BLOCK] once more, select [F5] and [INVERT] the area.

This will leave you with the drop shadow itself.

6. And once more with [BLOCK], [COPY] the outline version in transparent mode and position it over the dropped shadow.

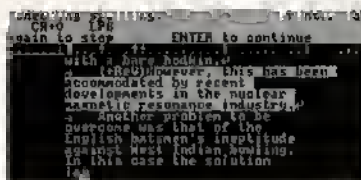
This takes a bit of trial and error but you can easily [UNDO] and reposition it until you have it right.
 Brian Pearce, New Jersey, US



The six stages involved in producing a very smart "dropped shadow" effect in Micro Design 2 - a simple yet effective means of image embellishment

Check it out

It is possible to spell check just a given paragraph in LocoScript 1. Move the cursor to the start of the paragraph and press [+]rv
 2. Press [F7] for spell check and select 'just forwards from here'
 3. The spell checker goes through the paragraph, highlighting its progress (because of that [+]RV you typed in). When it gets to the end of the



There is a quick and easy way of spell-checking a single paragraph - or just a line, page or whatever - in LocoScript

paragraph, simply press [STOP] twice.
 4. Go back to the beginning of the paragraph and delete the [+]RV code. Hey presto! And of course it doesn't have to be a paragraph - you can use this method to spell check a line, a page or half a document. The choice, as they say, is yours!

Terry Pitt
 Walsall

And...CUT!

If you want to cut a long block of text in LocoScript, doing h with [COPY] then [CUT] (then any number) is actually faster than [CUT] then [CUT].
 Eileen Egles, Bognor Regis

Loco to Protext

I have just bought Protext, having used LocoScript 2 before. The program seems very powerful but I am having trouble adjusting to the way it works. I quite miss LocoScript's 'disc manager' screen and its functions. Do you know of any way I can install a similar device in Protext?

K Scruton, Birmingham
 8000 Plus: No, but maybe this conversion chart might help. This is a list of all the disc manager commands in LocoScript 2, and the equivalent operation in Protext, which are all commands to be typed in at the a> unless stated otherwise.

When Protext routines are given in brackets it means there is no direct equivalent command, but the effect can be had through other means, or a combination of commands.

LocoScript command	Protext equivalent
---------------------------	---------------------------

DISC MANAGEMENT SCREEN
 (Command mode - enter from edit mode with [STOP]. Get list of files with [f1] or by typing CAT or DIR. To get list of files in other groups than 0, for example group 3, type USER 3 or U3 then do a CAT or DIR)

C=Create document (Clear current document out of memory if necessary with CLEAR confirming with Y. Enter edit mode with [STOP]. Type text. In command mode SAVE or S giving name of new document)

E=Edit document LOAD or L and then follow prompts

P=Print document To print out document currently loaded, ie. the one displayed on screen PRINT or P (draft quality) PRINTQ or PQ (high quality) To print out other document PRINT or P (draft quality) PRINTQ or PQ (high quality) followed by name of document

D=Direct printing TYPEWRITER or TW optionally followed by figure denoting left offset (margin)

F=Fill (Print document which contains commands such as >AV "Give name: " NAME etc.)

M=Merge (Print document which contains mail merge commands such as >DF NAMES.1 and >RV TITLE SURNAME etc.)

From f1=Actions:
Make ASCII file PRINTF then follow prompts (This produces what LocoScript would call a 'page image' file with returns at the end of each line. For simple text file, put stored command >ZM 0 in original file before using PRINTF. This still leaves returns at the end of each line. If these are not wanted, put a ruler line in the original wide enough to make each paragraph one line long).

Add dictionary (SM and access dictionary utilities with U)
Show phrases LPHRASES or LP
Load phrases EXEC or X followed by name of execute file holding phrases
Save phrases (Make file of phrase assignments eg. KEY S "Yours sincerely" KEY F "Yours faithfully" etc. then save as normal file).
Show blocks none
Run LocoFile none, though an add-on database program called Protext Filer is available from makers Amor

f2=Disc:
Copy disc DCOPY then follow prompts
Verify disc none
Format disc DFORM or DFORMD then follow prompts
Rename disc none

f3=File:
Copy file COPY then follow prompts
Move file (COPY followed by ERASE)
Erase file ERASE or ERA then follow prompts
Rename file RENAME or REN then follow prompts
Recover from limbo (Rename the appropriate .BAK file. For example if you wish to recover the previous version of a file REPORT.1 rename REPORT.BAK as say REPORT.1A then edit that as normal. This can only recover previous versions of files, not accidentally erased ones)

f4=Group:

Rename group (Rename the file whose name ends in .GRP so the first eight letters are the new name. For example to change the group name OLD to NEW rename the file OLD.GRP to NEW.GRP)

f5=Document:
Inspec document (TYPE the document to see its contents on screen)
Set first pages (Use mail merge techniques. For example
 Set total pages to print out files CHAP.1 and CHAP.2 with the page numbers automatically running on, make up a new file, with appropriate headers and footers, which contains the stored commands >IN CHAP.1 >IN CHAP.2 and the two will be printed after each other with pages numbered in sequence when you print this document)

f6=Settings:
New paper type (Set margins in the document in question with stored commands such as >PL 66 and >SM 10 and ruler lines)
Paper types (Make template documents with the appropriate stored commands in and then MERGE then with documents to take those margins etc.)
New character style none
Character styles none
For character set none
For printer PRINTER or PR followed by name of printer driver or stored command >PR followed by name of printer driver
Standard printer (Set through CONFIG)
Printer defaults (Set through SETPRINT)

f7=Disc change: (Protext recognises a new disc as soon as an appropriate command is given such as CAT or COPY)

f8=Options:
Show limbo files (.BAK files are automatically shown on directory listings but only hold previous version of files, not erased versions)
Show hidden files (Protext does not show hidden or system files on directory listings; go into CP/M and type DIRSYS)

Marginally faster

When setting margins for a new layout in LocoScript 2 which involve slight alteration of the existing margins, there are a couple of neat shortcuts. Press [f2] while editing to change the layout or make a new one. Press [+] to move the left hand margin to the right, or [-] to the left. To jump to the right hand margin, press [SPACE]. Then press [+] or [-] to move it right or left. [EXIT] when the margins are correctly set.

The [+] and [-] are on either side of the space bar on a PCW8256 or 8512, and on the bottom left of the keyboard on a PCW9512.
 Jeff Bird, New York, USA

Enable labels

I wonder if you can help me, I have one and a half inch continuous sticky label stationery and wish to produce labels on them identical except for sequential serial numbers on them.

The labels are actually to stick on three-inch discs for a piece of software I am writing, and the number is the serial number of the user.

I am using LocoScript. Is it possible to produce what I want without merely putting the numbers in manually?

B Wright, Hitchin, Herts

8000 Plus: Yes. The trick is to put the text of the label in the header of a document with a page number inserted somewhere. In the main document, just put as many new pages as you want tickets, with no text, and you have each 'page' containing exactly one header, with the number inserted for you by the page number.

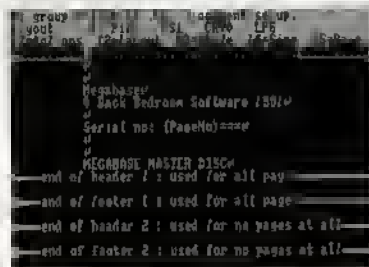
Let's say your software is a database called "Megabase". You want each label to have the name of the software, the copyright message, and a serial number.

LocoScript 2: set up a new paper type in the disc manager using f6=Settings, 'new paper type'. Call it 'Disc labels' with the following data: continuous stationery; height 9; left offset 0; top and bottom gap 0. Create the new paper type and write it to your SETTINGS.STD by following the prompts.

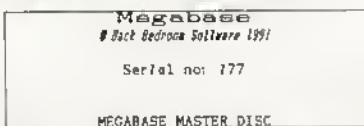
Now create a document DISCLABL, go straight into header editing area ([f1], 'Document setup', header 1) and make up your design. It must have exactly 9 lines in it,

including a blank one at the bottom as a separator: pad it out with [RETURNS] if necessary.

Somewhere in the label text put 'Serial no:' and follow it by the code [+] pn and three = signs (or more if you're printing over 999 labels). When you've finished the label to your satisfaction, select f5 'Page' to set up the page details of DISCLABL. First choose 'Paper types' and select your paper type Disc labels with the [+] key. Exit back to the Page menu and choose Page layout this time, setting the footer, top and bottom gaps to 0, and the header to 8 (Loco won't allow you a zero-length body - but don't worry,



This is a quick and easy way of producing automatically numbered labels, such as serially-numbered disc labels for that piece of software you've written



The result, showing its unique consecutive serial number. If you're using standard width one and a half inch labels, you'll have to trim them a little on either side to make them fit a standard three-inch disc properly

your header is 9 lines long anyway, which overrides this bit). [ENTER] and [EXIT] suitably all the way back to the main document and type in as many new page markers as tickets you want (a new page is [ALT] [RETURN]).

When you print out, make sure you start with the print head right against the very top of a label. Select the Print command, make sure the paper type selected is Disc labels, and your numbered labels roll out.

LocoScript 1: create a new document DISCLABS and clear all text ([CUT] [DOC] [CUT]).

Press [f7] and [ENTER] to go into the header and above header 1 type the layout of your ticket. Make it 9 lines deep and where you want the number to go, type 'Serial no:' then [+] pn followed by three = signs (or more if you're absurdly optimistic about sales and are printing over 999 labels - in fact for most home-produced software you'll only need two = signs). [EXIT] back to the main document and enter as many new blank pages (using [ALT] [RETURN]) as you want there to be tickets.

Save the document and when you come to print, make sure the labels are lined up just above the print head.

Press [PTR] and then [f1] 'Options'. Select continuous stationery using [+] and set the 'form length' to 9 and the gap to 0.

[EXIT] back to the normal disc manager and with the cursor over the document press p for print.

Your labels roll off the printer, all neatly numbered.

Which printer

I would like to buy a printer for my PCW 9512 to replace the Gattling gun daisywheel. The new printer should do the following:

1. Print Italics, bold etc.
2. Print graphics to high quality.
3. Be reasonably quiet.
4. Have a good manual.
5. Be under £300.
5. Be easily usable with my 9512.

Nicholas Cain, Letchworth, Herts
Try the Star LC24-10 at £240 or so from mail order advertisers in 8000 Plus which satisfies all these points.

Masterful tip

The one irritating deficiency in Masterfile is the absence of a copy function. This makes some jobs very tedious: for example, say you have to add 50 entries to your existing database of slides. A typical entry might read:

Date: 24 Sep 1991

Place: Bath

Subject: Bath Abbey

View: South west corner

The hundred entries were all taken on the same day at the same place and consist of views of Bath Abbey. The only thing that will change is that view. It's very tedious to enter the first three items 50 times, but Masterfile leaves you no option!

Here's a way to stop the tedium. Run up LocoScript and prepare a document consisting of:

24 Sep 1991

Bath

Bath Abbey

#

50 times (use [COPY] and [PASTE])

just six times and you can make 50 repetitions).

Then go down the file editing the # characters (using [FIND] # [ENTER]) to the appropriate text - 'south west corner' or whatever.

Save it on to your Masterfile disc and make an ASCII file, plain text, from it using [f1] (LocoScript 2) or [f7] (LocoScript 1) on group 0 of the disc, calling the ASCII version - SLIDES.50, say.

Now run up Masterfile, press 1 for 'load/save' and then press i for 'insert file'. Give the name of the file to import as SLIDES.50 and answer 'no' to all other questions.

You will see the number of records clock up as the 50 new entries are gradually imported.

Users of Software Imperative's text pre-processor Foreword can use that and Masterfile simultaneously, so using Foreword's copy and paste functions a procedure similar to that above can be employed.

R Willis

Carlisle

Cumbria

Vanity publishing

I know I can set separate footers for odd and even pages. But is there a way in LocoScript of getting it to print out just even, and then just odd pages? I want this so I can print out long report on both sides of my continuous paper and then collate the pages like a book.

Keith Bland, London

8000 Plus: No - all you can do is print the document out twice, once each side of the paper, staggering the pages by one page. Thus you get two copies of the manuscript, one correctly numbered with odd pages on right hand sides and even on left, the other 'incorrectly' numbered with odd on left and even on right. When inserting the paper allow a lead run of two blank sheets, then print the document.

Remove and turn over, re-insert and leave just one sheet blank. The result should be like this:

Sheet A blank/blank, Sheet B blank/p1, Sheet C p1/p2, Sheet D p2/p3 and so on.

Taking sheets C, E, G etc. will give a perfectly paginated set. Sheets B, D, F etc. will be correctly paged, and the other set can be kept for reference.

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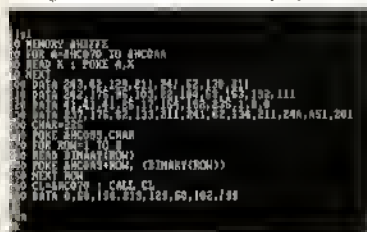
Character study

I am writing a game in BASIC and want to be able to redesign some screen characters. How do I go about doing this?

Jeremy Burn, Stevenston
Ayrshire

8000 Plus: Easy. Suppose you want a character that looks like a space invader. First decide a character to assign it to - say 225, which is normally é (i.e. the command PRINT CHR\$(225) produces an é on screen).

Next design the character on an 8x8 grid which has each square twice as high as it is wide. At the top of the

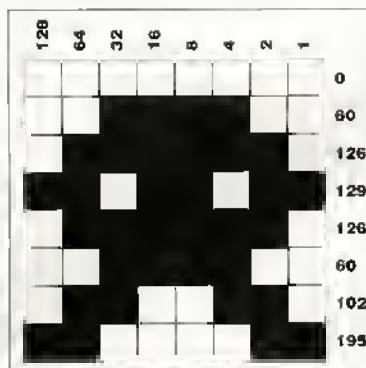


This listing can redefine characters in BASIC to your own design



Proof it works! Character 225 is no longer an é but is now a space invader character that you can use in your own programs

grid write the numbers 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 and 128 from right to left, one above each column; then add the totals given by the filled-in squares. A look at the diagram should explain things - the second row totals 60 for example ($32 + 16 + 8 + 4 = 60$). In this diagram you have the figures 0, 60, 126, 219, 126,



These figures will let you redefine a character in BASIC very easily

60, 102, 195.

Now run the following listing. Note how the character you're changing, number 225, is in line 200, and the square you're just worked out is in line 300:

10 MEMORY &HBFFE

```
20 FOR A=&HC070 TO &HC098
30 READ X : POKE A,X
40 NEXT
100 DATA
243,62,129,211,241,62,130,211
110 DATA
242,175,95,103,22,184,58,153,192,111
120 DATA
41,41,41,25,17,154,192,235,1,8,0
130 DATA
237,176,62,133,211,241,62,134,211,24
2,251,201
200 CHAR=225
210 POKE &HC099,CHAR
220 FOR ROW=1 TO 8
230 READ BINARY(ROW)
240 POKE &HC099+ROW,
(BINARY(ROW))
250 NEXT ROW
260 CL=&HC070 : CALL CL
300 DATA
0,60,126,219,126,60,102,195
```

From now on until you switch off, the command PRINT CHR\$(225) produces not a é but a space invader character. (Printing is not affected). Of course you can define any other number character by altering the number in line 200 and the data in line 300, and you can set up some sort of loop in lines 200-300 to redefine as many characters as you want at a time.

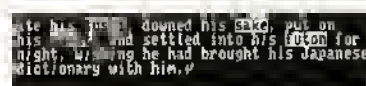
Italic panic

I'm always forgetting to turn off italics in a LocoScript document with the result that whole pages come out in italic. Any suggestions?

Mark O'Brien, London

8000 Plus: Well, you could keep an eye on the top of the screen, which obligingly tells you whether italic or bold are selected (by displaying the words 'Italic' and 'Bold'). Alternatively, try this old trick.

1. While editing a document, 'Show codes' by pressing [F8] then [F+] and [ENTER] (in LocoScript 1, [F1] [F+] [ENTER]).
2. Type the sequence [+][i][+].rv. Cursor back to the beginning of the sequence and press [COPY], then cursor to the end of the sequence - which should all light up - and press [CUT] then i.
3. Type the sequence [-][i][-].rv. Cursor back to the beginning of the sequence and press [COPY], then cursor to the



Always forgetting to turn Italics off? A simple trick can highlight them like this so you're less liable to forget end of the sequence - which should all light up - and press [CUT] then j. 4. From now on, when you press [PASTE] you switch on italics - but also highlight the italicised phrase. [PASTE] switches off italics and turns off the highlighting.

This way all italics are in highlight on screen and you can easily tell if you're in italics when you shouldn't be. Just remember to press [PASTE] to switch italics on, and then [PASTE] to switch them off again.

A similar trick can be done with bold; replace i and j in the above with b and c, for example.

That counts

I have been told that if I upgrade my version of LocoScript to the latest one I will have a word-count facility that can tell me how many words are in a document. Is this true?

M Graham, Paris

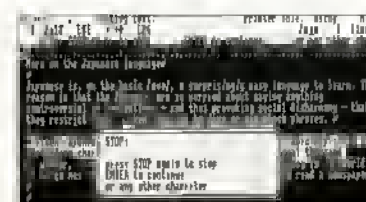
8000 Plus: Well, it may be true. There isn't a word-count facility as such, but you can sort of do it, very slowly, on the latest version of LocoScript as follows. (If you want to get the latest version, you can do so by ringing Loconet Software on 0306 740606 - £30 for LocoScript 1 owners, £10 for Loco 2).

1. Edit the document.
2. Press [F7] and select 'automatic addition' with cursors.
3. [ENTER] and after a while - about 7 per thousand words - you see a flag come up saying how many words are in the document.
4. Select 'do not update the user dictionary' and [EXIT], or continue editing as normal.

STOP it

For the benefit of other readers it's worth mentioning something obvious that took me ages to find out - the fact that [STOP] stops a current operation.

If you happen to start a spell check by mistake, [CUT] a block of text when you meant to [COPY] it, or you have even started to scroll through to the end of a 34K document through pressing [DOC] instead of [PARA] - don't wait



LocoScript's [STOP] key can save a disaster if you've pressed the wrong key

for the operation to finish! Just press [STOP] and a flag appears.

Pressing [STOP] again stops the operation right there, or any other key resumes it - thus stopping the spell check, limiting the text cut, or stopping that tedious scroll to the end dead.

M Jones
Ruthin
Clwyd

Flipping right

The manual for Flipper 3 says that Mini Office Professional can't be used with a PCW8512. Actually there seems to be a way round this. Use separate self-start discs for both the MOP spreadsheet and database in isolation from the main package - in this way Flipper 3 works without difficulty if you allocate half memory for LocoScript and half for MOP. H Galloway, Shefford, Beds

Wheel power

I would like to buy a new daisywheels for my PCW 9512 printer; a 17 pitch wheel for quotations in my thesis. The problem is that friends tell me you can't mix two different wheels in the same document. I don't want to split up my thesis into hundreds of different parts, so what can I do?

Ian Morris, Sevenoaks, Kent

8000 Plus: Don't worry! Of course you can mix styles in a document. The problem is when you come to print it out. There's no way of putting any command into the document itself which will stop the daisywheel printer so you can change the daisywheel when it comes to the 17 pitch bits, but you can do it manually. It means you have to watch the whole document printed out though!

Print out the document as usual. While the printer is printing the last line of 12 pitch before the 17 pitch quotation, press [PTR]. The printer will stop at the end of the line. You can now change the daisywheel: pull back the lever on the left of the daisywheel, slip the 12 pitch one out and drop the new one in. Push the lever back and make sure it goes all the way or you'll get gibberish. Now press [EXIT] and the PCW continues printing with the new

another of Nostradamus's predictions which uncannily hit the mark:

The English rosa and Indian snake
Onca mora much strifa and toll doth make
The Gods do fall, their heavenly food
Stein'd and spoill'd, as by their blood,
(Book III, Quatrain XVI, lines 45-49)

Nostradamus is clearly talking about England's Test series defeat against the West Indies in 1991. He amazingly predicts with astonishing accuracy the downfall of 'The Gods' (Allan Lamb, Graeme Hick etc.). And what is the food of the Gods? Ambrosia - a clear reference to Curtly Ambrose, the bowler responsible.

In the next quatrain Nostradamus incredibly predicts the winner of the 'best kept pig' section of the Drifffield Agricultural Show of 1946:

Mixing styles like this on your PCW9512 printer is quite possible - you just have to be patient enough to watch the whole document printing out

17 pitch wheel.
Repeat the process while it's printing the last line of the 17 pitch to change back to the 12 pitch wheel.
As you'll gather from the above, there's no way of mixing wheels in the same line.
Protext users can put a command in which will stop the printer

automatically at the right spot. The line >WT insert the 17 pitch wheel for example stops the printer right there and displays the 'insert' message on screen (the message is optional). You change the wheel; press [RETURN], and the printer continues. A warning: this only works if you're using a 10/12 pitch daisywheel, not a Thesis PS wheel.

Quick reference

LocoFile owners have the ability to make LocoScript keep documents you often want to refer to - address lists, phone numbers, diary files etc. - constantly available in the memory, whatever disc is in the drive. Just put it on one of your startup discs; then when LocoScript starts up, it copies all LocoFile .DAT files to the memory. Hence you can call these .DAT files up any time for reference, whatever discs you have in the drive.
J Sturrock, Guildford, Surrey

On your pins

For anyone who is having trouble with their 8256 or 8512 printer chopping the top and bottom off the letters, this might cure it.

1. Move the print head to its rearmost position (by lifting off the black plate with "Amstrad" written on it, and moving the coloured lever to the right of the ribbon).
2. Remove the ribbon and stand the printer on its front (to get the pins vertical).
3. Apply a small amount of light oil to the heads of the pins (ie between the platen and the print head). WD40 is OK but graphite penetrating oil is better.
4. Leave the printer to stand for an hour or so.
5. Clean leads of pins with kitchen or bathroom tissue.
6. Restore printer to the horizontal, "print" a whole page onto some scrap paper, noting deposit of ink and dust etc., dumped by pins onto first few lines.
7. Replace the ribbon; print a page onto more scrap paper.
8. Repeat if necessary.

It's sometimes said that you can stop the print head chopping off the tops and bottoms by moving the coloured lever mentioned in step 1 to the most forward position. I think this is a short-term solution as it seems to encourage a build-up of gunge on the pins, and that it is best left in the rearmost position.
Neville Upton, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands

Quick, move!

Here are some key combinations that greatly speed up moving around LocoScript. They are hinted at in the accompanying manual but not fully listed - so here they are:

[ALT] [PAGE]	cursor to top of page
[ALT] [SHIFT] [PAGE]	cursor to top of document
[ALT] [PARA]	cursor to top of current paragraph
[ALT] [SHIFT] [PARA]	cursor to preceding unit marker
[ALT] [EOL]	cursor to end of preceding line
[ALT] [SHIFT] [EOL]	cursor to beginning of line, or if already there,

to beginning of line above	[ALT] [CHAR]	cursor back one character
	[ALT] [SHIFT] [CHAR]	cursor back one word
	[SHIFT] [EOL]	cursor to beginning of next line
	[SHIFT] right	cursor jumps 20 spaces to right
	[SHIFT] left	cursor jumps 20 spaces to left
	[SHIFT] up	cursor jumps 40 spaces up
	[SHIFT] down	cursor jumps 40 spaces down

L Birkett, Halesworth Suffolk

No all

I wonder if you can answer the following questions about LocoScript for me.

1. Is there an easy way to automatically replace, say, all italic-on commands with bold-on commands? [EXCH] won't let me enter codes so it won't work there.
2. Even though LocoScript 2 is faster than LocoScript 1, it still isn't very fast. If I buy some add-on memory of the sort advertised in 8000 Plus for my PCW, will that make it faster?
3. Is it possible to print sideways on my 8256? That way I could print very wide tables of figures on my printer without having to split them as I now have to.
N Barnes, Beverley, N Humberside

8000 Plus: 1. No - you have to do it all manually. EXCH only works with text, not with layout codes, formatting commands or anything else.
2. No; memory by itself doesn't offset your PCW's speed. However, Cirtech can add an extra chip to your PCW that will speed up all programs, including LocoScript, by about 30%. Details from Cirtech, Monksford Stables, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, Scotland TR6 0RU. It costs around £100.
3. No again - there used to be special utilities that would take a file and print it out sideways, but for LocoScript they were very fiddly and anyway don't seem to be available any more (if anyone knows different, please tell us).

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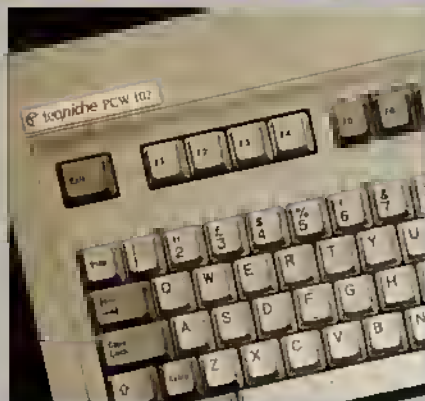
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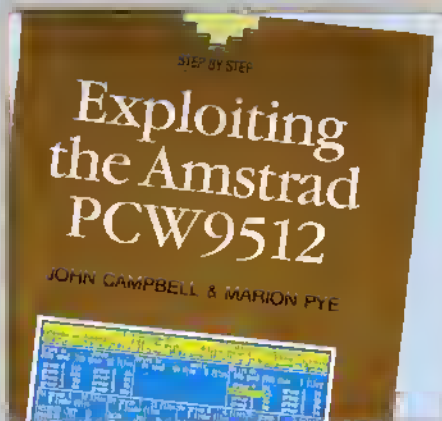
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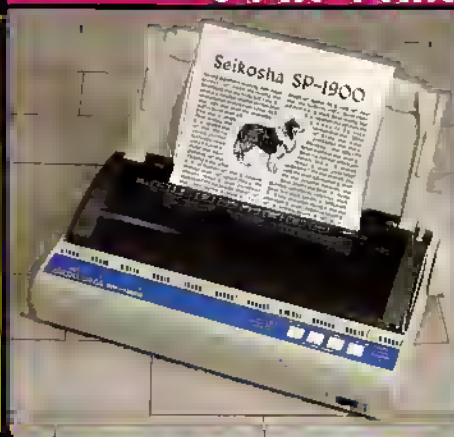
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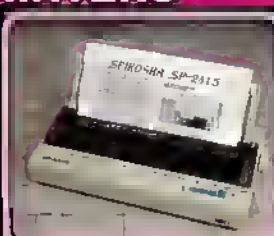
STARTER KIT: £29

TOTAL RRP: £129

SAVING: £195

SILICA PRICE: £109

+VAT = £151.58 Ref: PRI 8200



240 CPS DRAFT 136 COL

- Seikosha BP-2415A1 - 9 pin - 136 col
- 300cps SD, 240cps Draft, 50cps NLD
- 17.5K Printer Buffer + 5 Fonts
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- Epson and IBM Emulation
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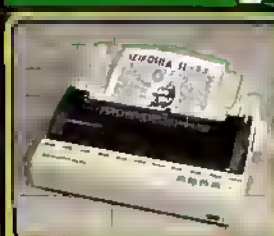
STARTER KIT: £29

TOTAL RRP: £349

SAVING: £130

SILICA PRICE: £219

+VAT = £285.55 Ref: PRI 8205



240 CPS DRAFT 80 COL

- Seikosha SL-92A1 - 24 pin - 80 col
- 240cps Draft, 60cps LQ
- 44K Printer Buffer + 2 Fonts
- Parallel Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 360x360dpi
- Epson Emulation
- Optional Font ROM - 7 Fonts
- FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit

RRP: £236

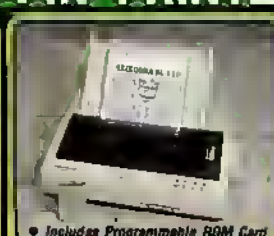
STARTER KIT: £29

TOTAL RRP: £265

SAVING: £171

SILICA PRICE: £94

+VAT = £122.16 Ref: PRI 8202



324 CPS DRAFT 80 COL

- Seikosha SL-218A1 - 24 pin - 80 col
- 324cps Draft, 108cps LQ
- 5K Printer Buffer + 9 Fonts
- Parallel and Serial Interfaces
- Graphics Resolution: 360x360dpi
- Epson and IBM Emulation
- Optional Auto Sheet Feeder
- FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit

RRP: £369

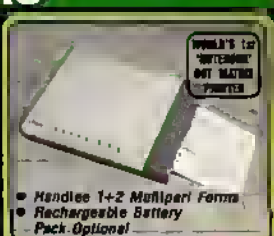
STARTER KIT: £29

TOTAL RRP: £398

SAVING: £256

SILICA PRICE: £142

+VAT = £188.58 Ref: PRI 8221



144 CPS DRAFT 80 COL

- Seikosha LF-20 - 24 pin - 80 col
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- 1K Printer Buffer + 3 Fonts
- Parallel Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 300x180dpi
- IBM Emulation
- Built-in 50 Sheet Auto Feeder
- FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit

RRP: £269

STARTER KIT: £29

TOTAL RRP: £298

SAVING: £125

SILICA PRICE: £174

+VAT = £228.18 Ref: PRI 8230

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277 CPS DRAFT 136 COL

- Seikosha SL-230A1 - 24 pin - 136 col
- 277cps Draft, 82cps LQ
- 5K Printer Buffer + 9 Fonts
- Parallel and Serial Interfaces
- Graphics Resolution: 360x360dpi
- Epson and IBM Emulation
- Optional Auto Sheet Feeder
- FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit

RRP: £699

STARTER KIT: £29

TOTAL RRP: £728

SAVING: £275

SILICA PRICE: £453

+VAT = £588.99 Ref: PRI 8423



462 CPS DRAFT 136 COL

- Seikosha BP-5500A1 - 9 pin - 136 col
- 462cps Draft, 106cps NLD
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- Parallel and Serial Interfaces
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- Epson and IBM Emulation
- Optional Auto Sheet Feeder
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RRP: £1299

STARTER KIT: £29

TOTAL RRP: £1328

SAVING: £329

SILICA PRICE: £999

+VAT = £1298.83 Ref: PRI 8506



520 CPS DRAFT 136 COL

- Seikosha BP-5780A1 - 18 pin - 136 col
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- Parallel and Serial Interfaces
- Graphics Resolution: 240x240dpi
- Epson and IBM Emulation
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STARTER KIT: £29

TOTAL RRP: £2028

SAVING: £329

SILICA PRICE: £1700

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- Seikosha SBP-10A1 - 18 pin - 136 col
- 800cps Draft, 200cps NLD
- 64K Printer Buffer + 2 Fonts
- Parallel and Serial Interfaces
- Graphics Resolution: 240x240dpi
- Epson and IBM Emulation
- Built-in Cut Sheet Feeder
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STARTER KIT: £29

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SAVING: £329

SILICA PRICE: £2700

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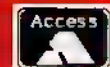
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 **teqniche**

Postscript

It's the birthday edition of Postscript!

Not all of you are in the mood for celebrating with us, but we do have gripes about gremlins, discussions on discs, problems with printer pins, missives on MicroDesign, and much more besides! Don't be shy – write in to Postscript, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. We're sorry, but we just cannot reply to your letters personally

Gremlins!

Oh dear! The Future Publishing gremlins appear to have had a happy time in the letters column of the August 8000 Plus.

In my letter, the comment that the © character was supported on the Star LC10 printer was changed to a comment that the c character was supported – it isn't! Please point this out to your readers before anyone rushes out to buy an LC10 to print c and is disappointed. (Of course, if they buy an LC24-10 or LC24-200, LocoScript's download mode will enable printing the character.)

Also, your article on the Amstrad fax was silent on using the signature feature and stored phone lists from LocoScript. Issue 18 of our newsletter Script actually covered this in detail, and anyone interested in getting a copy should contact our sales department on (0306) 740606.

Howard Fisher
Locomotive Software

8000 Plus: Yes, you're quite right – the gremlins have been off on summer recess, and they came back with a vengeance just in time for your letter last month! Something bizarre happened on the text's journey from the PCW to the Apple Mac, which resulted in a copyright symbol appearing instead of the half. Thank you for taking the trouble to put the record straight!

Adding machine

I have a great deal of sympathy for your correspondent who questions the wisdom of buying a lot of expensive add-ons to a PCW when the purchase of a PC might in the long run be more reasonable.

The point of all this is much more relevant given items of news in the August issue of 8000 Plus.

I refer in the first place to the article on replacing Drive B of the PCW 8512 with a 3.5" drive, a move which the author of the article thinks is justified

because of the increasing scarcity of 3" drives. What happens if Drive A fails? How do you boot the PCW with LocoScript? What price all the expensive extras?

Then there is the great possibility mentioned in the same issue of Amstrad marketing a new PCW with a 3.5" drive. Surely, these two tidbits of news must give us all pause for thought. I was about to invest in some additional memory with one of the Rampacs. Now, I shall just sit back and wait to see the specification of the new computer.

Neville Collins
Hammersmith

8000 Plus: It is safe enough now to assume that the new machine will have a 3.5" drive – all the news stories which we have researched bear witness to that. I have had a couple of letters which echo your worry about the availability of replacement 3" drives in the future, and although it is likely that the supply of them will dwindle, I feel sure that it is in some supplier's interest to maintain their stock levels of the original drive. The sheer number of PCW owners worldwide is a strong enough basis upon which to make the decision! No-one could be naive enough to assume that all users will upgrade, or indeed that they will install a 3.5" drive; upgrades cost money, and despite the fact that the wheels of commerce have to grind on, you have to be realistic about the financial power of the user. I would not worry unnecessarily, Mr Collins; we're all curious to see the new machine, but you know what they say about curiosity...

What's going on?

Firstly, I must confess to being a Computer novice and though I find your magazine very helpful, I do seem to have great gaps in the basic concepts of computing. I have a PCW 9512 and have just purchased the program High Score

and cannot load on my machine. At the end of the programme notes I find the programme was written in Protext.

I assume that to run High Score I will have to buy a Protext programme. The problem now arises which one, as I see advertised in 8000 plus, two programmes for Protext.

One Protext...The Word Processor, and upgrading to a PC. The former costs £49.90, and the latter £110.00 I do find what program is compatible with my machine a minor mystery, especially with the great number of programmes that are on offer.

Help would be appreciated as one can waste a substantial amount of money if one gets it wrong.

G. Stanley
Frimley

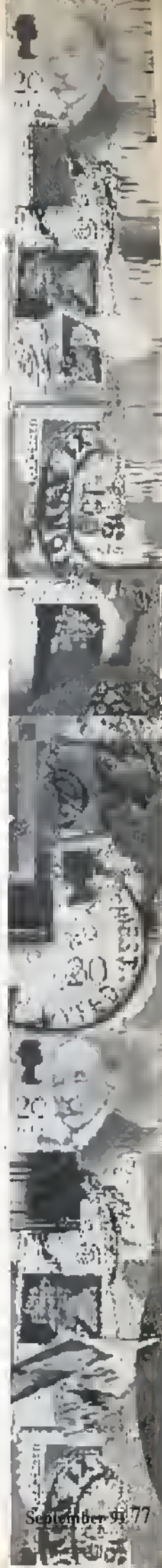
8000 Plus: I have spoken to Rob Ainsley, author of High Score, and he advises that you re-read page 2 of the manual. There, it takes you through, in some detail, the process of preparing a self-booting copy of the program.

It is very well explained, and you shouldn't have any problems getting High Score to work afterwards! Rob also offers quite comprehensive after sales support, and invites users of any of his products to write in with any queries they may have.

The address is 46, Arondale Road, Bath, BA1 3EG. He will deal with any enquiries promptly.

Mail order

Your program for checking the accuracy with which one transcribes a Basic program from your pages into our machines is excellent. Here is a challenge: can anybody write a similar programme (or other checking device) for LocoMail? I find it dreadfully easy to make mistakes (such as omission of an &), and



dreadfully difficult to proof-read.

**Dr M.A.T. Rogers
Ramsden**

8000 Plus: Now there's a challenge; there must be a budding LocoMailer out there who will oblige. Come on, readers, we know you can do it!

Lucky number

One thing you didn't mention in your reply to G F Marshall's query on what is his numeric keypad.

The keypad is automatically enabled in many cases where LocoScript function requires a numeric input. For example after +P,+LP,+LS, f1 Actions (Document set-up: page layout and page numbers), f5 Page (find page), Print document (no. of copies), etc. On pressing ENTER to confirm your input it is disabled again.

I find this useful, even though in some cases (eg where the function is a menu requiring use of cursors) the 5 (and sometimes 1 and 3) may not even be available.

**David Simpson
Zambia**

8000 Plus: Thank you, David. Incidentally, if anyone lives in the same neck of the woods as Mr Simpson, he is hoping to start a PCW user club in the near future. Turn to page 8 for details!

Value verdict

Yes I agree with Chris Goodall (August), Protexi doesn't get full value from 8000 Plus. But here's even more bias – in not one of the issues of the magazine I have, is there an article on any of the Sage programs and yet they are excellent programs, offered for sale by many of your advertisers. There is definitely a bias in favour of Locomotive software!

Like Mr Goodall, I look at your contents before I buy your mag. – the DIY modification articles are excellent. Keep up the good work, but could it include Sage sometime?

**S.W. Turner
Edinburgh**

8000 Plus: There are so many programs to cover, and only one issue a month in which to do it! The only way to try to please all of the people all of the time is to respond to the general consensus of opinion about what is required from us.

I'm sorry if you feel that we have neglected Sage products, but just to receive a letter expressing such an opinion has earned the programs a mention in my infamous little red book, where feature ideas from readers are safely stored. If anyone has a desire to see more coverage of a given program, or just wants to tell me what they like/dislike about the mag, let me know. I'll be only too pleased to add your suggestion to my list!

Driving force

Thank you for the article in the August 8000 Plus on replacing the 3" B-drive in the PCW 8512 (or, in my case, upgraded PCW8256) with a 3.5" B-drive. I am considering doing this but I wonder how, after the event, I can copy a large amount of existing data (mainly LocoScript) on 3" B-discs onto new 3.5" – discs? Of course, one could copy document by document from B to A before the modification and then from A to B after the new drive is fitted, but this would be very tedious and time-consuming, and would require a lot of 3" discs: there must be an easier way! – I hope I have not overlooked something in the article. I shall be very interested to receive your suggestions

**Dr.M.J. Denton
Upper Batley**

8000 Plus: Another oft asked question, MJ, which as far as we know, you have answered for yourself. Your method seems to be the only way (and I await, with genuine eagerness, a flood of letters telling me that I am wrong!).

I suppose that it is the downside of upgrading from the rather out-dated 3" drive to the industry standard 3.5". 9512 and 8256 single drive owners don't of course, have this problem. Now is a prime time for those budding programmers to write a handy utility to overcome the rather laborious process which you describe!

Fair's fair

I refer to the letter to you by Locomotive Software's Mr Howard Fisher and published in the August issue:

Mr Fisher has told only part of the story: he has omitted to mention the degree and extent of support given to the purchaser of Printer Support in its various forms. I have no such diffidence: for I know the purchaser of Locomotive Software's products to be the purchaser of far more than the discs.

The 'external' printer of my PCW 8512 is a Star LC24-10 – and excellent machine of which I do not at all regret the purchase. But (due to an idiosyncrasy of the star LC24-10's mechanism, and to no fault of LocoScript) the LC24-10 initially would not print on single sheets when the software was set up for Continuous Stationery mode. So did Locomotive say: 'Too bad it's the printers fault?' They did not; rather did they address the matter and write for me two fresh discs which successfully overcame the problem. And when I wished to produce

long dashes thus: (_) and thus: (_ _), on the LC24-10, Locomotive sent me an escape sequence for my Character Set which enabled me to do so, as you can see. (Star Micronics themselves collaborated with Locomotive on these two matters.)

I have quoted but two of the many examples of Locomotive's courteous and helpful attitude towards me. Technical expertise is not cheaply bought: the cost in salary of that part of the time of Locomotive's staff devoted to me would possibly add up to more than the cost of the products I have purchased from Locomotive, and I am but one customer among untold others.

I would certainly say in conclusion that I do not enshrine readily or unduly, and that I certainly am as prepared as the next person to condemn the 'unacceptable faces of capitalism' (There are computer-related companies operating today whose so-called 'customer-support' is a sick joke.) Locomotive Software, however, has a most acceptable, a more than mere value for money, a fair-dealing, face.

No, I have no shares in Locomotive. But fair do's eh?

**Larry Graham
Coventry**

8000 Plus: Thanks for your letter, Larry

Visible ink

A while back I coupled a Star LC24-10 printer to my 8512 with the proper printer driver from Loco, and it is all working splendidly.

The only trouble is in re-inking the ribbons. The cassettes part easily enough, and Caspell's Re-Ink spurts easily enough, but after about six re-inkings, the ribbons started to jam, which made the printer jam. I traced the trouble to a roller at a point just before the ribbon left the cassette, which had also had a share of spray, and had seized up as the ink dried. A clean and oil set it going again. Then the spray head of the inking bottle became blocked, sending ink in many wrong directions (ugh). At that point I decided on major re-thinking before re-inking.

Now I am using "Stamp Pad Ink" from W H Smith. A little ink (very little), bled here and there in the cassette and left to spread and dry, makes an easy, efficient job, quite the cleanest method I've yet found, and just about the cheapest, too.

I have recently had to produce some Filofax printouts. The Fanfold paper (105x165mm) at cheapest works out nearly 4p per sheet, but I have been using Metric Foolscap (210x330mm) at 1p per sheet, and doing a multiple print I can get 8 pages on each sheet. All that is then needed is a double fold and a slit with a knife.

No, I am not a Scot, but I share their concern for economy, and I guess most of your readers do too.

**Arthur Gilbert
Bury St Edmunds**

8000 Plus: Sound and useful advice, Mr Gilbert; it is often amazing how everyday objects can be used with your PCW! Thank you for your letter



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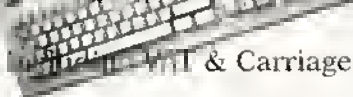
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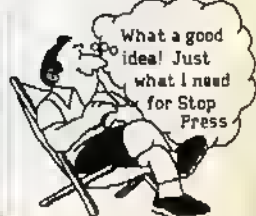
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## Line 'em up!

Can you tell me if there is a CP/M utility that will show ALL the files in all the groups on a disc with their size on the screen at once, the way LocoScript disc manager does? Or a program that I can buy that does this?

SuperDos helps, but again shows only one group at a time. Though I prefer to use Protext to LocoScript, I often have to hunt through my discs to find the right group for the file I want.

**Dr. R. Eban**  
Stanford-in-the-Vale  
Oxfordshire

**8000 Plus:** Yes. For 8000 series machines, copy DIR.COM from side 3 of the CP/M discs into the memory using PIP. Then the command M:DIR [user=oh] {RETURN} does just that. I seem to remember, when I interviewed you for Case in Point some ten months ago, that you have a 9512, in which case the copying for the first step should be done from your CP/M boot-up - which, of course, does not have a side 3!

On a slightly more personal note, I hope that the charity you so actively support, Paintings in Hospitals, is continuing to flourish!

## Option to buy

I was very interested in several of the files and utilities described in the two recent issues of 8000 Plus about the Soft Options disc.

Unfortunately I can find no mention of its current availability or even existence in the rest of the magazine then or since! Can you let me know if it is still available and if so where I can get a copy, please?

**Michael John Margetts**  
Merseyside

**8000 Plus:** Certainly. Although the Soft Options disc is not currently advertised in our mail order pages, it is still available via our Somerton office, price £5.95. The address is 8000 Plus Mail Order, Future Publishing Ltd, The Old Barn, Brunel Preenet, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7PY, telephone (0458) 74011

## Come off it!

I could not believe my eyes when I saw in the July edition of our magazine on page 79 "Tip Offs" "One at a Time" where you say that LocoSpell cannot check a paragraph only. I have been doing this for months now on my 8512.

It is simple. Put the cursor at the start of paragraph and make a note which line it is and count the number of lines the paragraph contains. Press [F7] use "Start from here" on menu and press Enter. When the right number of lines completed are shown, press "Stop" twice

and the usual menu for the end for "LocoSpell Finishing" will show.

**C.W. Cramp**  
Horsham

**8000 Plus:** We stand corrected - thank you to all those people who wrote in to tell us. I think it was the fault of the gremlins again...

## Pin it down

Regarding John Bennett's problem (Postscript, June) with a sticky printer pin. Sometime ago I had the same problem and no amount of cleaning with various recommended (and some not recommended) fluids made any difference. I, too, bought a print head as I was rather desperate to continue with my work.

New head (which was interesting to fit!); same problem. Remembering a tipoff from the early days I took all the electrical connections to bits that I could find (multi pin plugs etc.) and cleaned them. Problem went away and hasn't come back since.

Theoretically this shouldn't happen the spring should push the pin back however small a distance it is pushed forward. I can only think that not enough electricity was being given to the magnet to move the pin forward enough for the spring to react.

I am left with a puzzle and a spare printer head, or is it a spare head and a printer puzzle?

**Mark Davis**  
Beckenham

**8000 Plus:** Whatever the puzzle, I am pleased to hear that you have found a solution, Mark!

## Working overtime

In your guide to MicroDesign 2, I seem to have missed something, and that is, how to use the disc! Is the disc supplied:

- a) Self booting (I've tried to no avail)
- b) To be used with CP/M
- c) To be used with LocoScript 2?

If options b) or c), what's the procedure? There is an awful lot of us computer illiterates out here who have been happily using LocoScript for years, but lack the faintest inkling of what to do when landed with a prompt on the screen: Help please!

**Ned Potter**  
Dorking

**8000 Plus:** The disc is to be used once you have loaded the actual MicroDesign 2 program - it is designed to complement the master program, which is available from Creative Technology. Unless you have MicroDesign 2, the disc is inaccessible. The instructions you need in order to see the contents of a disc such as this are on page 35 of the 8000 Plus Guide to MicroDesign.

## Sorted out

Re: 9512 - 'External Printers'

Further to your request I am pleased to confirm that it now appears possible to use another printer on the 9512 without the need to have the supplied daisywheel connected.

1) LocoScript 2:

The latest version of LocoScript allows this facility and the upgrade is apparently supplied free with LocoFile and also on the 'printer' disc about which there has been so much controversy.

2) CP/M:

The latest version of the operating system for the 9512 from Locomotive allow the use of external printers without the need for having the supplied daisywheel connected with most CP/M programs. One notable exception is MicroDesign 2 and Tweak which cause problems after Quitting when using the later versions of CP/M.

Creative Technology do make this point in their manuals.

However:

3) MicroDesign 2:

Supplied with Creative's latest utilities disc is a fairly versatile printer driver, apparently written by citech, which has an easy installation programme for MD2 allowing the use of an assortment of external printers without the daisywheel being connected.

Using 'GENCOM' this driver may apparently be used with varying success with other CP/M programmes.

Obviously, mention of 'Gencom' in your columns will lead to a number for enquiries and this should give you the opportunity for a short article on its use.

This information is clearly supplied in good faith and I am sure you will obtain the facts with a couple of phone calls before spreading hope followed by despair.

**R H Curtis**  
Gnome Designs  
Leeds

**8000 Plus:** Thank you, Mr Curtis - very helpful indeed.

## At a glance

May I suggest that in the Good Software Guide in 8000 Plus, that you put the date of the Issue beside each item of software in which the review of that software had taken place.

This will help your readers to look up with ease the necessary reviews in back issues.

**Anthony Dunstan Smith**  
Devon

**8000 Plus:** Yes, that's a very good suggestion Mr Smith - as you so rightly say, a potted review is quite sufficient for an 'at a glance' guide, but it would be nice to have a handy reference to a more in-depth appraisal of a program.



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● Both work on all PCWs, though Scorecard's scoring chart facility won't work on a 9512, £5 off if you order both programs. From **Sticky Dog Software**, 46 Avondale Road, Bath BA1 3EG.

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# Next month!

## Reference Look

We're very pleased to welcome freelance writer Nick Vandome back to the pages of 8000 Plus next month, with a special feature on writing a reference book. Nick has been doing just that over the past few months, and so he has plenty of useful advice to offer you! What's more, he'll be showing you how to enlist the help of your PCW to compile a publication of this kind. Writers stand by – for next month!

## Board walk

If you are careless with your coffee cups or slapdash with your sandwiches when working on your PCW, the chances are that your keyboard will bear the brunt of any spillages. The result is likely to be, at the best, sticky keys – and at the worst, total keyboard failure. Next month, we show you how to give your board a total overhaul, in a step by step, fully illustrated guide to keyboard maintenance. So, if your keys are in need of a wash and brush up, don't forget to order October's issue!

## Public Opinion

In the first of a new series, we'll be looking at some of the Public Domain software currently available for the PCW. There is a wealth of programs to choose from, and at such low prices, PD could be the ideal way to experiment with some of the many PCW applications on offer. But with such a vast selection of software to choose from, where on earth do you begin? We'll be looking at a handful of programs each month, telling you what you need to get started, and how much you can expect for your money. Don't miss it!

The October issue of

# 8000 PLUS

is on sale from

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# It's our birthday

– and we want you to celebrate with us!

**N**ow forgive us if you will for being a little self-indulgent this month. It's just that we're rather excited about the sixtieth issue of 8000 Plus. The magazine's fifth birthday is a testimony in itself to the popularity of the PCW, and we're very pleased to be involved so heavily with such a strong market. So pleased, in fact, that we've decided to celebrate in style. We've got rather a radical kind of competition to mark our birthday revels, mainly because we cannot possibly allocate a pecking order to the prizes which we have to offer. Just look at the line-up; first on the list is a copy of Newstar Software's top-selling spreadsheet, Cracker 2. You may have followed our special Cracker tutorial last year, and if you did, you'll be well aware of the power and versatility of the spreadsheet. Worth over £40, this is sure to be a welcome addition to any software collection!

Next on the list comes LocoFile – that well-known database from the Locomotive family of software. It is currently the subject of an on-going tutorial in LocoPlus, our regular section devoted to LocoScript and its cousins, so if you've never used the program before, you'll have a good source of help and advice within the magazine.

Away from the serious applications and on to matters Creative (pun intended!), we have a

couple of stunning prizes to offer from the world of DTP. First up is MicroDesign 2, the definitive desktop publishing package for the PCW. Using the program couldn't be simpler, and you'll soon find yourself unleashing an artistic flair which you never knew that you possessed! And if you already own that program, you are certain to be interested in Creative Technology's brand new utilities disc, an extra which brings a host of exciting extensions to your creative powers!

Speaking of utilities, we've a brace of the finest to give away from Software Imperative. Flipper 3 is one of the best programs for the PCW which we have ever come across. With its power to split the machine into several different environments at once, Flipper brings an extra flexibility to the PCW. Once you've got it, you'll never know how you coped without it! The second of the pair is Foreword, the clever text pre-processor which brings more than a passing element of organisation to the production of lengthy documents. It's a utility well worth having!

For those of you with primary school aged children or grandchildren, we have three versions of Database Software's educational package, Fun School 3. Available for three age brackets (under 5's, 5-7's and over 7's) this comprehensive and easy to use collection covers all the

fundamental areas of elementary education. Based on the guidelines of the national curriculum, Fun School is the ideal way to encourage the younger amongst us to enjoy learning!

Well, that was exhausting, but the list has nearly finished. All you have to do is to answer one, simple question. Who was the first Editor of 8000 Plus? Now that's not too taxing, is it?

The next stage is to pop the answer on a postcard, together with your choice of prize from the list above, and the model of PCW which you own, and send it to Birthday Competition, 8000 Plus, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Incidentally, if you don't qualify for one of the eight prizes above, we've got ten 8000 Plus T-shirts and five 8000 Plus binders up for grabs for runners up as well!

Now here's the bumper bonus prize: not only does the first winner to be drawn from the hat secure the prize of their choice, they also win an all expenses paid trip to beautiful Georgian Bath to spend a day with the 8000 Plus team! We'll pick you up in the 8000 Plus limousine (well, Karen's VW actually), wine you and dine you, and you'll be able to visit the sacred 8000 Plus office to see just how we put the magazine together! So, if you'd like to visit the team, or win any of the above prizes, hurry up and send in your entry – the closing date is 25th September!



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| * 8256 | Fabric colours    | 2741Col | £4.95 | Band C |
| 8256   | Multistrike films | 2741MS  | £3.95 | Band B |

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We recommend FABRIC ribbons for these printers

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|--------|-------------------|---------|-------|--------|
| 9512   | Black fabric std  | 2746FN  | £3.95 | Band B |
| 9512   | Fabric LONGUFE    | 2746LL  | £4.95 | Band C |
| * 9512 | Fabric colours    | 2746Col | £4.95 | Band C |
| 9512   | Multistrike films | 2746MS  | £3.95 | Band B |

Multistrike films are the kind supplied with new 9512's but FABRIC ribbons can be used with Re-ink, to further increase the printing life of the ribbon.

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| LocoFile (8256/8512)         | £32.95 | Derek Rogers Total Accounting                   | £79.95  |
| LocoFile (9512)              | £32.95 | Rogers Demonstration Disk                       | £ 4.95  |
| LocoMail (8256/8512)         | £28.95 | (Relundable on return if ordering full version) |         |
| LocoFile & Mail Combo        | £47.95 | Sage Payroll                                    | £59.95  |
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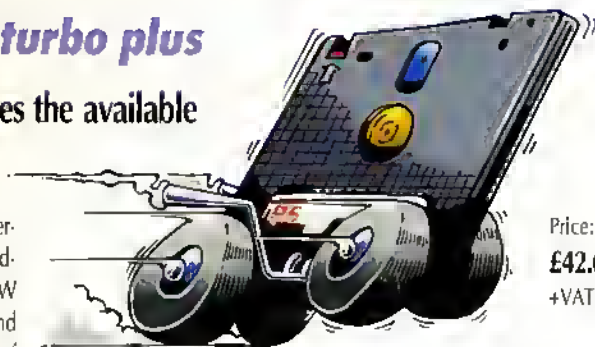
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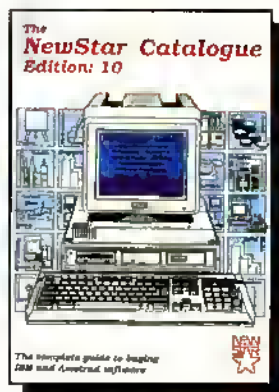
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